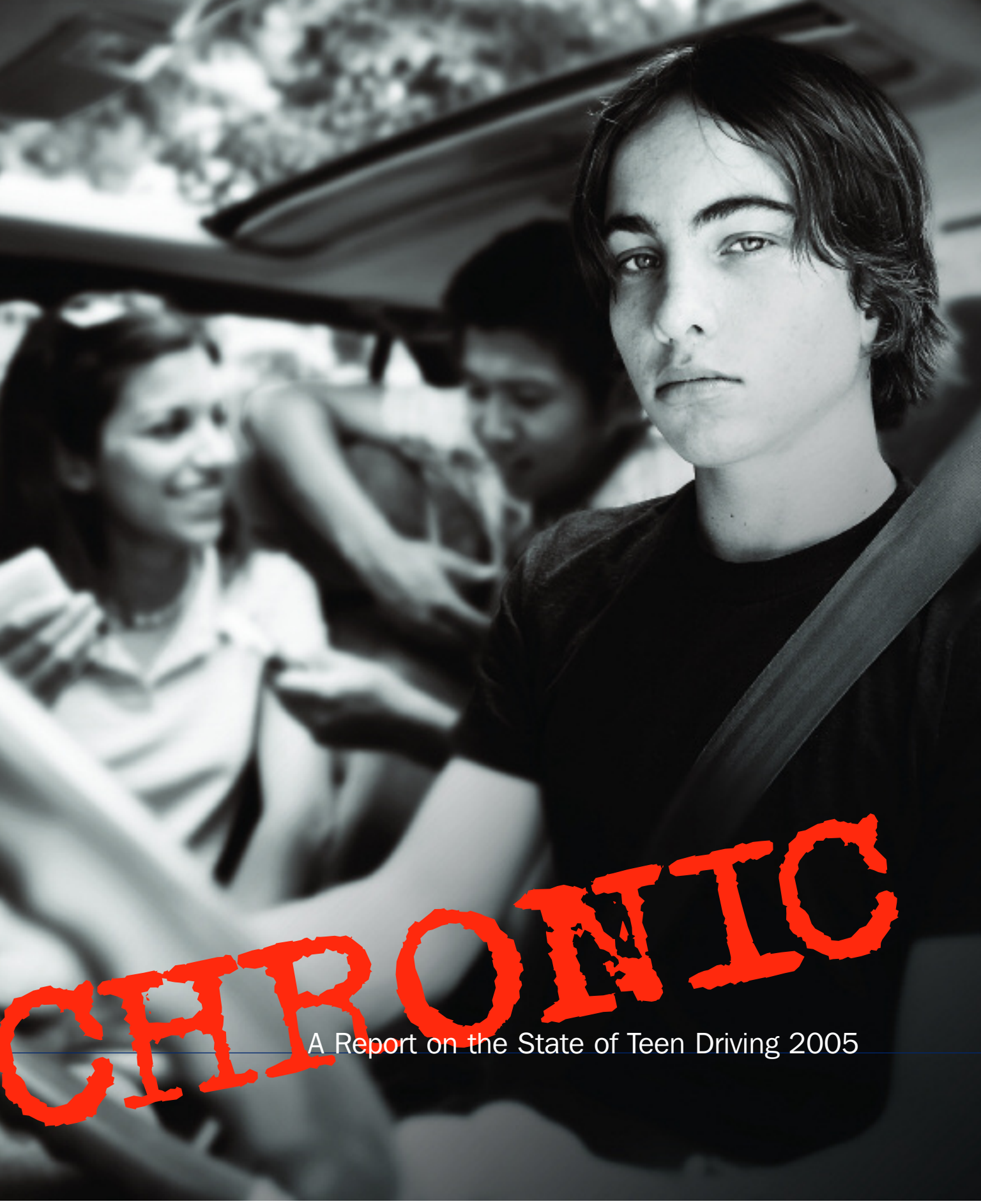

CHRONIC

A Report on the State of Teen Driving 2005

Allstate FOUNDATION

The Allstate Foundation is an independent, private, non-profit organization funded by subsidiaries of The Allstate Corporation. The Allstate Foundation develops and funds programs across the United States that focus on three areas:

–safe and vital communities

–tolerance, inclusion and diversity

–economic empowerment

One way to make America's communities safer is to help American teens become as safe as they can be on the road. It is with that goal in mind that The Allstate Foundation, in conjunction with an expert advisory board and with the knowledge, experience, and resources of our program partners, has prepared this report on the state of teen driving. Our focus is teen *attitudes*, the underlying mindset that conventional teen-driver programs largely do not address. Making a positive difference in the way teens think about driving offers the best hope of reducing teen accidents and deaths – and that's our goal.

To contact The Allstate Foundation about this program, or to access an electronic copy of this report, please visit www.allstate.com/community/chronic.htm.

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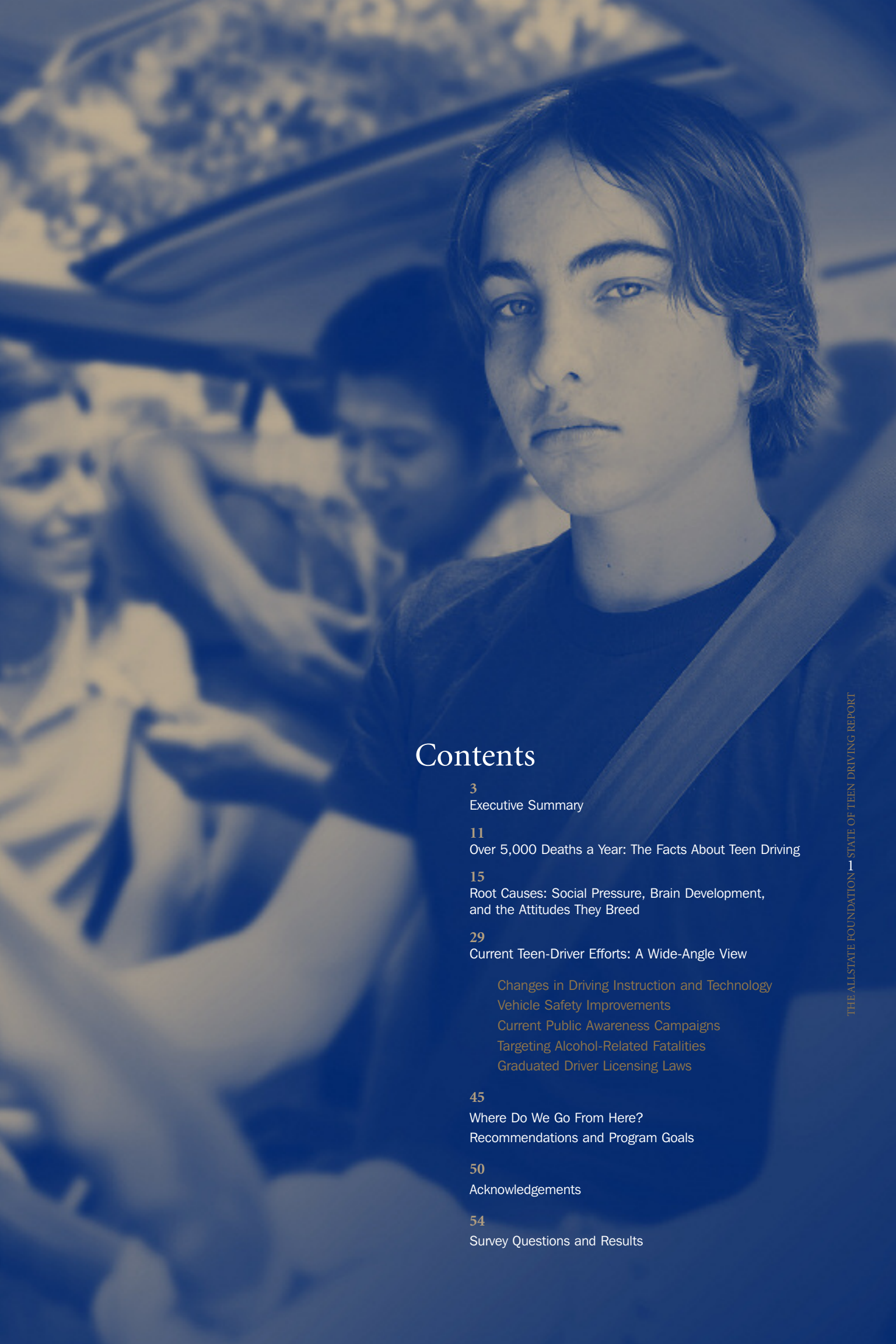

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In addition to conducting extensive research on teen drivers' attitudes, The Allstate Foundation also reviewed results of two recent studies of brain development in adolescents and young adults. The research helps explain why teens' attitudes – and therefore their driving – are largely unaffected by conventional safe-driving programs.

Executive Summary

Last year in the United States – and every year for the past decade – between 5,000 and 6,000 teenagers were killed in motor vehicle accidents. No other kind of hazard or behavior comes close to claiming as many teen lives. And in addition to those killed each year, some 300,000 are injured.

These are staggering numbers, representing a chronic public health issue that has yet to find a high enough place on the national public health agenda. For even though the past several years have seen a large and continuing proliferation of teen-driver safety programs all across the country, we see these sad totals year after year. And with an expected 23-percent increase in the number of teen drivers on the road in just five years, the problem will likely only get worse unless new approaches to teen driving safety are found.

It was with the goal of identifying effective new approaches that The Allstate Foundation closely examined the problem of teen driving. We have compiled our findings and recommendations in this report. Working with a diverse panel of expert advisers, we looked at existing programs and studied the available data. We also commissioned original research on teen attitudes toward driving – a national online survey of 1,000 teens between 15 and 17 years old. Respondents were drawn from a diverse mix of ethnic backgrounds and from both genders. Some already had their driver's licenses; others were expecting to get theirs in the near future.

A FOCUS ON ROOT CAUSES

Evidence from this wealth of sources suggests that the shocking statistics of the last decade won't change for the better until the safe-driving efforts aimed at teens attack some of the *root causes* of unsafe teen driving. For the most part, conventional teen-driver safety programs have not addressed root causes associated with teen attitudes and mindset.

- The first of these root causes is *social*: simple peer pressure nudges teens towards risky driving habits. Research shows that the presence of other teens in a car being driven by a teen significantly increases the chances of a crash – whether or not the passengers are explicitly urging the driver to make unsafe traffic maneuvers.
- The second cause is *biological*, an issue of brain development. Recent advances in neuroscience tell us that key parts of the brain's decision-making circuitry do not fully develop until the mid-20s. So, in actual driving situations, teens may weigh the consequences of unsafe driving quite differently than adults do. This, combined with the increased appetite for novelty and sensation that most teens experience at the onset of puberty, makes teens more disposed to risk-taking behind the wheel – often with deadly results.

And as might be expected, these two root causes, the social and the biological, combine and reinforce each other in actual driving situations, leading teens to develop *attitudes* toward driving that increase the likelihood of accidents. As the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reported in March 2004, teens'

"attitudes seem to be largely unaffected by [conventional safe-driving] programs – and attitudes strongly influence how driving skills and knowledge are put to use."

NEW RESEARCH APPROACH BRINGS DEEPER INSIGHTS

It's true that much of what we learned during the course of our research is disturbing, but there's also a good deal that gives reason for hope. Our focus-group discussions showed, for example, that teens are aware that driving is a weighty responsibility, and their exhilaration for this long-awaited freedom brings with it a tinge of nervousness or fear. Also, the "don't drink and drive" message has gotten through loud and clear.

But still, teens do not consider driving to be dangerous per se. They are much more focused on the benefits of driving than on the perils, and they voice skepticism that traditional methods of instruction, including driving school and driver's ed, will influence their behavior or that of their peers. When pressed about the consequences of unsafe driving, their top concerns are losing their driving privileges, harming themselves or others, and incurring financial loss by damaging vehicles or other property.

Here, in brief, are some of our key findings:

- **It's them, not me.** Most teens say they are good drivers, and that it's *other* teens who drive "recklessly, distractedly, cluelessly." They add, however, that speeding is part of the daily driving experience, that "everyone does it." Although they know that it is not smart to ride with a reckless driver, they are not always willing to challenge or criticize another teen who they believe is driving unsafely. Similarly, they know that driver distractions – both inside and outside the vehicle – pose the biggest threat to safety, but they are reluctant to give up cell phones, music, and other things that can tax a driver's concentration.

- **Drawn to risk-taking.** A large majority (74 percent) of our online survey participants recognize that driving is a serious responsibility, but many of them say they routinely engage in risky driving behavior. Fifty-five percent said they sometimes exceed the speed limit by more than 10 miles an hour, and 40 percent said they would speed in the coming year. Twenty-one percent said they have ridden in a car driven by a peer who had been drinking.

Despite the proliferation of teen safe-driving programs, teen fatalities in the United States have remained at about the same level for the past 10 years.

- **Good and bad peer pressure.** The survey also confirmed that peers are a major influence – both positive and negative. Nearly half said they are sometimes distracted by passengers (47 percent), and nearly as many said they drive more safely without friends in the car (44 percent). Nonetheless, more than half (53 percent) said friends would be the most effective influence in getting them to drive more safely.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE

In this report, The Allstate Foundation presents its detailed findings and makes recommendations for reducing teen fatalities and injuries on the roads.

The first section of this report, **"Over 5,000 Deaths a Year: The Facts About Teen Driving"** (pp. 11-13), gives a statistical overview of the problem. Here we've gathered and summarized the often alarming facts and figures, and we identify the kinds of conditions and circumstances in which teens are most likely to be involved in car crashes. This section includes a state-by-state breakdown of traffic deaths among 16- and 17-year-olds during the two-year span of 2002-2003 (the most recent available data).

"Root Causes: Social Pressure, Brain Development, and the Attitudes They Breed" (pp. 15-27) presents the results of focus-group research and a national survey commissioned by the Foundation in an attempt to discover the underlying attitudes among teens that might influence them toward unsafe driving. We found that teens are most receptive to safe-driving messages during the period when they are learning to drive. Also – and it may come as a surprise to some – we found that teens appear to understand traffic laws and the importance of following them about as well as adults do. It's when teens are actually behind the wheel that social pressures and the exhilaration of newfound freedom often lead to risky behavior.

"Root Causes" also includes reports by two experts who provide a scientific context for what we discovered in our focus groups and national survey. Laurence Steinberg, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at Temple University, describes how the intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions of brain function develop at different rates from one another, and according to different timetables. That fact, combined with the social pressures all teens experience, renders teens more prone than adults to risk-taking behavior.

Also enlightening is the report by Jay Giedd, M.D., chief of brain imaging in the Child Psychiatry Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health. Dr. Giedd describes the key physical differences between adolescent and adult brains as revealed by magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology. He finds, among other things, that the human brain matures over a much longer period than previously thought, and has a remarkable ability to modify its structure in response to environmental pressures. This last

characteristic can be both good and bad. While the brain's "plasticity" often stimulates learning, creativity, and energy, Dr. Giedd observes, it also can lead to dangerous missteps and trial-and-error until around age 25.

"Current Teen-Driver Efforts: A Wide-Angle View" (pp. 29-43) looks at the strengths and limitations of typical teen-driver safety programs available to young drivers today. We've found that most traditional driver-education programs go only so far, providing teens with information and instruction but stopping short of addressing the underlying attitudes that influence how teens drive.

For example, despite advances in driving-simulator technology and the availability of sophisticated simulator programs like DriveSafety in Orem, Utah, and The Safe America Foundation based in Marietta, Georgia, we believe two key questions remain unanswered: First, how effective are driver simulators for training teen drivers and assessing their driving performance? And second, does simulator training make teens safer drivers, and has there been any reduction in traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities among teens that can be attributed to this training?

We also note that the public awareness campaigns sponsored by state and federal government agencies, corporations, non-profits, and parent organizations have not changed significantly in the last 20 years. Often these programs focus most of their attention on drunk driving – a serious problem but one that accounts for less than 25 percent of all teen crash fatalities.

One of the most promising developments in the last 10 years has been the introduction of graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws. In fact, during the last decade, every state has implemented some form of graduated licensing. GDL laws have cut fatal crashes involving 16-year-old drivers by 26 percent nationally. That's progress, and it's heartening – but it's only a beginning. As the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported in 2002, "Although GDL has reduced the number of teen fatalities, highway accidents continue to be the leading cause of death for this age group." In fact, GDL laws across the country are inconsistent and often weak, and those we must look to as the primary enforcers of GDL laws – parents – may not be fully aware of them.

Finally, **"Where Do We Go From Here? Recommendations and Program Goals"** (pp. 45-49) summarizes our view of the problem and makes a number of recommendations for reducing teen traffic fatalities and injuries. These include strengthening the GDL laws that every state has already adopted and the development of grass-roots programs that teens themselves have a hand in shaping. This section includes a report by Peter Zollo, president of Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU), who offers valuable guidance about how best to reach teens with messages and programs designed to make them safer drivers.

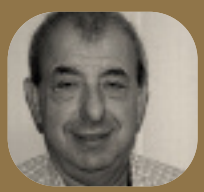
The evidence tells us that making a difference in teen driving safety requires an effort that, at a minimum, includes elements such as:

- ***Teen participation*** – Teens have told us loud and clear that the best way to effectively address this attitudinal challenge and generate a genuine dialogue among teens is by letting them shape the program and search for solutions themselves. To that end, The Allstate Foundation will convene a panel of teen advisers from different walks of life throughout the country, and hold a series of teen conferences to help shape our program's specific components.
- ***Grassroots empowerment*** – Teens we interviewed told us that safe driving messages would have more impact if they came from or with a connection to people in their own schools and communities. With more than half of the teens we surveyed telling us that they had already been in a crash, real teens and real parents – and real and often tragic examples – are likely to have an impact that instructional videos and generic scare tactics simply cannot. One element of The Allstate Foundation program will provide local advocates tools to help them reach their peers and to make a difference in their local communities.
- ***Rigorous measurement and accountability*** – The limitation of many a well-intentioned teen-driver program is the lack of a way of measuring success. Consequently, it is difficult to know which programs are most effective, which should be expanded or replicated and which should be modified or replaced. Building measurability and accountability into teen safe-driving initiatives will help make that possible. The Allstate Foundation will use research both to guide the development of effective strategies and tactics and also to constantly measure our progress. We will also encourage the growing number of community organizations and individuals focused on teen driving to incorporate research and measurement into their own programs wherever possible.

ONLY ONE MEASURE REALLY COUNTS

Of course, the ultimate measure of success will be the steady decline of teen crashes, fatalities, and injuries over a sustained period of time. We understand that many factors beyond our control influence the national crash rate, but we're encouraged by evidence pointing to teen-driver attitudes as an area of untapped potential for bringing those numbers down.

To that end, The Allstate Foundation and its partners begin a long-term commitment to building a strong, attitude-based teen-driver safety program that launches in early 2006. With a 10-year commitment of support from The Allstate Corporation, we hope to build a program that meets teenagers on their terms and in their language. A program that will inspire them to drive safer, first and foremost by re-examining the way they think about driving. A program that will finally begin to loosen this killer's grip on the teenage population.



A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

On July 30, 2004, my life changed forever. My 18-year-old son Brett and his best friend Andy were out driving on Cuba Road, a long crest-filled road notorious for speeding, in Long Grove, Illinois. As Andy picked up the speed to 112 mph, Brett turned to him and said, "I trust you, Shorty," and in a matter of minutes, Andy lost control of the car as it became airborne and crashed between two trees. Andy was ejected from the car through the windshield and survived the crash. Brett, knocked unconscious from the impact to the windshield, was flown by helicopter to the local trauma center. He underwent emergency brain surgery and survived for only six days.

I desperately needed a reason for why this crash took place, and at first I was baffled. The car Andy was driving had all the right safety features. Both boys had driver's education and were considered by many to be good drivers. Neither drugs nor alcohol was involved. It's true that the graduated licensing laws in Illinois are relatively weak, but I soon saw that the main cause was the attitudes of two invincible-feeling boys, and how the peer pressure at work between them whet their appetite for risk-taking. The boys were just out to have fun. That realization led me to form Brakes for Brett, a non-profit organization to educate teen drivers on the hazards of reckless driving.

Andy showed complete remorse immediately following the crash. His only concern was for Brett. In the hospital Andy kept on saying, "I killed my best friend and I don't deserve to live." Our family went to bat for Andy, especially knowing that it could have just as easily been Brett in the driver's seat that night, and convinced the prosecutor and the judge not to sentence Andy to jail time. Instead he'll work with me to educate teens about the realities of reckless driving. By June 2005, we had talked with over 18,000 high school students.

Every year, over 5,000 teens die in vehicle crashes, many due to speeding and reckless driving. I tell teens that I don't want them in a hospital bed in the intensive care unit with their parents holding their hand, rubbing their forehead and giving them permission to die.

Judging by the emails and letters that I receive, we're getting through to some of them. We're working to change their attitudes towards driving and ensuring they realize that their lives and those of their friends are their responsibility and can easily be lost.

—Michael Karlin

A BEST FRIEND AND DRIVER'S PERSPECTIVE

Let me start by telling you what kind of person Brett was. Brett was the type of person that could light up any situation. He could turn a horrible day or moment into a good one. You could never stay mad at Brett, no matter what the circumstances were. He had this glow – this feeling he gave off every time you were around him. He was the best friend anyone could have asked for. Brett was loyal, truthful, and always there for the ones who cared about him.

The day of the accident Brett had been home ill. I remember walking in and he was eating pizza, telling me he had three hot showers and was feeling better. He was ready to go. Our roommate had let us borrow his new 2004 Honda Accord to go by a buddy's house to say hi. Compared to my Cavalier, it was like having a Cadillac. As we drove over there with XM radio blasting, we turned onto Cuba Road where Brett's friend lived. I waited for the other cars to pass and then we were off. I accelerated and the car started reaching speeds of nearly 100 mph. Brett looked at me and said, "I trust you, Shorty," and clicked his seat belt. We became airborne at 112 mph and the adrenaline kicked in — it was all happening so fast that I didn't know how to react. The next thing I knew the car slammed between two trees, and sparks were flying up all around the car.

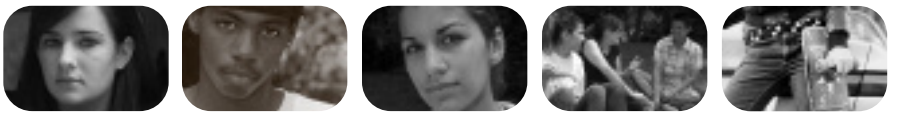
I passed out, and when I woke up I was confused. I was standing on the other side of the road, on the phone with my girlfriend. I didn't know what was going on or where I was or how I got there. I was trying so hard to figure out how I got to this dark road, but I couldn't remember. I looked down and noticed I had no shoes on. They had been ripped from my feet when I was thrown through the windshield. My yellow shirt was now red. I touched my face to see if that was where the blood was coming from, but sure enough I felt nothing but skin. I turned around and saw Brett with his arm hanging out of the window and head leaning towards the dashboard. I ran to him screaming his name and yelling for him to get out of the car. He never once looked up at me or responded.

I was taken away in an ambulance with the paramedics cutting through my clothes and asking a million questions. After getting 32 stitches at the hospital and taking a trip to the Lake County jail, I was released on bond to go home. I was scared and confused, and pieces of the night before were missing. Later that day I went to visit Brett knowing he had gone through brain surgery and not knowing how his parents were going to react. I was scared out of my mind. Luckily, for me, they weren't mad at me but at the situation.

Six days later, my best friend could not overcome the injuries and died. What had happened turned my life upside down. As much as I hate to admit it, I am still not over it. I don't think I will be for a while. This is a wound that I haven't experienced before, and I don't know how to heal. In the past six months or so, I have gone to talk to high school students to tell my story. It has really taken its toll on me. I am now trying to look at the good I have done and move forward one day at a time.

—Andy Short

Motor vehicle crashes claim over 5,000 teen lives annually. It's almost as if the September 11 terrorist attacks happened twice every year.



Over 5,000 Deaths a Year:

The Facts About Teen Driving

Motor vehicle crashes are the number-one cause of death among American teenagers, killing 62,563 teens from 1993 to 2003. On average, well over 5,000 teens die in such crashes every year, including over 2,000 passengers, and these figures have remained fairly constant, despite all efforts. In fact, the crash and death rates for teen drivers have been tragically high ever since the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) began compiling such data in 1975.[1]

In 2002, car crashes accounted for about 38 percent of all teens' deaths in the United States, far outpacing homicide (13 percent), suicide (11 percent), and a variety of other causes. Given the facts, it's surprising that teen traffic fatalities are so seldom discussed as the pressing public health issue that they really are. Former National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) head Jeffrey Runge, M.D., was cited in a recent story on *Dateline NBC*, saying that "If we had any other disease that was wiping out our teenagers at the rate of thousands per year, there would be no end to what we would do as a society to stop that."

As a group, teenage drivers have a higher crash risk than do other age groups, and 16-year-old drivers – not surprisingly – have the highest risk of all. Among these youngest and least experienced drivers, the leading cause of fatal crashes is driver error (77 percent), followed by speeding (38 percent) and alcohol (less than 25 percent). And when other teenagers are in the car, crashes are more likely to be fatal. (The overlap in percentages is explained by the fact that some crashes involve more than one factor.)

All this is true despite the fact that teenagers drive fewer miles than all but the oldest drivers. For example, **the crash rate per mile driven by 16- to 19-year-olds is four times that of older drivers, and within that group, 16-year-olds have rates twice as high as 18- and 19-year-olds.**[2]

ECONOMIC COSTS

The economic cost of teen crashes – in terms of lost productivity, property damage, and medical costs – is enormous. Based on NHTSA estimates, we believe that 16- and 17-year-olds alone account for about $14 billion of the total economic cost of vehicle crashes. Medical costs make up about 14 percent of that figure, or nearly $2 billion annually. Former NHTSA Administrator Jeffrey Runge, M.D., estimates that "every brain injury, we believe, costs society about $1 million."

These youngest drivers are not the only ones who die when they crash their cars. According to the most recent available data, crashes with 16- and 17-year-olds at the wheel caused a total of 5,678 deaths during the years 2002 and 2003 combined. Forty percent of the fatalities – 2,242 – were the drivers themselves. Of the remaining 3,436 deaths, 1,664 were the teen drivers' passengers, many of whom also were teens.[3] These statistics are further examined, by state, on the following page. (We should note that final crash statistics for 2004 will be released late in 2005.

"If there was a disease that was wiping out our teenagers at the rate of thousands per year, there would be no end to what we would do as a society to stop that."— Former NHTSA head Jeffrey Runge, M.D.

Though preliminary indications suggest a slight *overall* decrease in traffic fatalities from 2003 to 2004 – a drop of around 250 people – we do not yet know what the statistics specifically for *teen* drivers will be. In any case, even if teen traffic fatalities did drop slightly in 2004, this is no reason to expect a lasting downward trend, given the previous 10 consecutive years of comparable teen fatality totals.)

INGREDIENTS OF A CRASH

Teen driving statistics are often met with resignation. However, the statistics show that teen crashes can't be chalked up to fate or freak circumstances. The crashes have predictable – and preventable – patterns and conditions:

- ***Nighttime driving*** – Fatal crash rates are higher at all times of the day for 16-year-olds than for older drivers, but in any given mile driven, teens are twice as likely to crash at night (9 p.m. to 6 a.m.) as during the day. Sixty percent of young teens' nighttime crashes occur before midnight. Weekend nights during the summer months have higher fatalities.[4]
- ***To and from school*** – Driving to and from school also carries a high crash risk, as more teens are driving during these times and are likely to have other teens in the car. After school in particular, they may be preoccupied with getting to social or extracurricular activities on time.
- ***Teen passengers*** – Statistics show that fatal crashes involving 16-year-old drivers are much more likely to occur when other teenagers are in the car, and that the risk of a fatal crash increases in proportion to the number of teenage passengers. Nearly half of all teen crashes in 2003 involved one or more teen passengers. Take one teen driver, add one teen male passenger, and the risk of a fatal crash nearly doubles.[5]
- ***Speeding and basic driving errors*** – As noted above, speeding and driver error account for the majority of teen driving fatalities. While alcohol still continues to be a factor, most new drivers are sober, but are prone to making simple driving errors or overcorrections, often while they're already speeding. For example, in 2003 alone, over 1,800 fatal crashes were caused by teens who simply failed to yield, veered out of their lane, or were driving too fast.

Given all these figures, it is not surprising that the U.S. Government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the tragedy of teen driving a pressing public health issue. What *is* surprising is that society as a whole does not. Clearly, a comprehensive public health approach is needed to make a positive difference, and a good place to start is with the attitudes teens bring to driving.

2002-2003 crash deaths involving 16- to 17-year-old drivers, by state and victim category.

	16- TO 17-YEAR-OLD DRIVERS	PASSENGERS OF 16- TO 17-YEAR-OLD DRIVERS	OCCUPANTS OF OTHER VEHICLES	NON-OCCUPANTS	TOTAL
Alabama	67	36	29	4	136
Alaska	4	1	8	1	14
Arizona	38	37	37	8	120
Arkansas	44	18	9	5	76
California	128	126	114	44	412
Colorado	40	31	31	4	106
Connecticut	20	19	11	2	52
Delaware	15	7	1	1	24
District of Columbia	1	0	3	2	6
Florida	116	84	102	39	341
Georgia	106	58	53	18	235
Hawaii	4	4	2	1	11
Idaho	17	16	7	1	41
Illinois	88	85	54	17	244
Indiana	59	47	41	6	153
Iowa	23	24	15	2	64
Kansas	31	26	18	3	78
Kentucky	71	43	35	4	153
Louisiana	48	27	15	5	95
Maine	12	8	4	3	27
Maryland	27	25	15	5	72
Massachusetts	16	17	10	6	49
Michigan	81	52	61	18	212
Minnesota	58	40	23	9	130
Mississippi	48	27	29	3	107
Missouri	80	58	50	19	207
Montana	13	6	4	1	24
Nebraska	23	20	8	0	51
Nevada	17	14	8	5	44
New Hampshire	6	3	3	0	12
New Jersey	22	16	17	5	60
New Mexico	22	26	13	5	66
New York	55	68	34	21	178
North Carolina	72	51	48	11	182
North Dakota	5	2	4	1	12
Ohio	93	72	61	13	239
Oklahoma	40	29	26	3	98
Oregon	21	29	15	0	65
Pennsylvania	93	65	44	15	217
Rhode Island	7	3	2	0	12
South Carolina	58	26	22	4	110
South Dakota	12	14	8	2	36
Tennessee	65	42	31	11	149
Texas	175	133	149	37	494
Utah	27	16	8	2	53
Vermont	8	0	4	0	12
Virginia	50	42	28	6	126
Washington	37	22	23	10	92
West Virginia	21	11	7	2	41
Wisconsin	51	35	38	4	128
Wyoming	7	3	1	1	12
U.S. Total	2,242 (40 percent)	1,664 (29 percent)	1,383 (24 percent)	389 (7 percent)	5,678

Based on the most recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

"I know I'm going to be a distracted driver. I'm always playing music or on the cell phone, and I'm not willing to turn off my phone when I'm in the car."

— Female teen

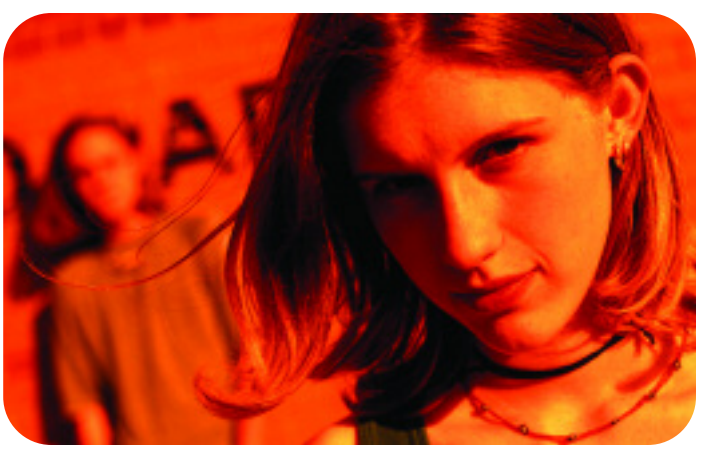
Root Causes:

Social Pressure, Brain Development, and the Attitudes They Breed

To find out what and who influences teenagers behind the wheel, The Allstate Foundation followed two paths. First, we conducted a series of focus groups and commissioned a national survey of teen attitudes toward driving. Then we consulted the most up-to-date scientific data on brain development and adolescent psychology. Our approach – examining the attitudes and motivations that influence teen driving – marks a departure from traditional avenues that typically focus on technical driving skills, highway and vehicle safety, or state and federal legislation. What we learned is troubling in some respects, heartening in others. First, the good news:

They Get It

By and large, teenagers recognize that driving can be dangerous. In fact, in our survey, teens themselves identified vehicle crashes as the number-one cause of death among their peers. And though that's welcome news, it's important to keep in mind that in actual driving situations, teens often behave as though they don't fully appreciate those dangers. Seventy-four percent of teens said that driving unsafely poses serious risks, and the teens who participated in our own focus groups told us point blank that programs that go beyond what's offered in standard driver's education classes would be worthwhile and would make a difference with their peers.



Beyond the perception of risk, we found a surprisingly high number of teens who

have seen risk become reality. Nearly half of the teens surveyed had been involved in car accidents, and 25 percent had been in at least one accident when they were driving. The teens we met in person said programs that connect to their direct personal experience would be highly effective in changing attitudes and behavior.

When contemplating these statistics, it is important to remember that there are approximately 12.5 million teen drivers in America.[6] So, when a "mere" 6 percent of teens admit to "often" or "very often" running a red light, that means 750,000 teens could be running red lights – endangering themselves and countless others.

Some Common Teen Attitudes We Identified

"IT'S THEM, NOT ME"

The disturbing aspect of our survey findings related to the skewed perspectives and biases teens sometimes exhibited when comparing peers' driving behavior to their own.

- When asked why they felt "immune," 61 percent said it's because they consider themselves good drivers
- 43 percent classified their own driving as "somewhat" or "very defensive"
- 62 percent called their peers "somewhat" or "very aggressive" drivers

> "A lot of other drivers don't know what they're doing."
> — Male teen

Clearly, there is a disconnect between how teens rate themselves individually versus how they rate their peer group. As we delved deeper into the survey results, we found that, based on their responses, teens tend to be aggressive, risk-taking drivers.

"I'M A GOOD DRIVER, NOT A SAFE DRIVER"

Our research revealed a strong difference between boys and girls on the question of which gender drives more safely. And unlike most adults, who probably view "good" driving and "safe" driving as one and the same, we found that some teen drivers, both boys and girls, see them as different. For many teens, a "good driver" is a skilled one, and the driving skills teens appreciate aren't necessarily conducive to safety.

- 83 percent "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" that people can be skilled drivers but not safe drivers
- 46 percent of boys said they are "better" drivers than girls, but only 22 percent said they are "safer" drivers than girls
- 28 percent of boys and 55 percent of girls agree that girls are safer drivers than boys

"MOST ACCIDENTS ARE THE RESULT OF DRUNK DRIVING"

Alcohol is a factor in less than 25 percent of deadly teen crashes. And yet:

- 51 percent of the teens surveyed believed that *most* accidents involving teens result from driving drunk
- 21 percent of teens surveyed have ridden in a car driven by a peer who had been drinking
- 60 percent report no involvement with SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) but support what they teach

Teen driving under the influence remains a serious issue, but it shouldn't divert our attention from other, more frequent causes of teen traffic fatalities – such as driver error, which accounts for 75 percent of teen deaths on the road.

"I FOLLOW THE FUNDAMENTAL RULES, BUT I ALSO BREAK SOME RULES AND GET DISTRACTED"

The majority of teens consider themselves good drivers, and indeed most of them say they follow fundamental safety rules "very often," "often," or "sometimes." According to our survey:

- 96 percent say they wear a seatbelt
- 96 percent say they signal when changing lanes
- 90 percent say they come to a complete stop at stop signs

A closer look, however, indicates that a majority of teen drivers struggle with distractions and admit to engaging in potentially risky behaviors "very often," "often," or "sometimes."

> "This girl was driving. I didn't know her. She'd just switch lanes back and forth – she didn't even look."
> — Male teen

- 65 percent say they take their eyes off the road to look at something outside
- 64 percent say they speed up to go through a yellow light
- 56 percent say they make and answer phone calls
- 57 percent say they feel "extremely" or "very" distracted by weather; 47 percent by fatigue

"SPEEDING IS NORMAL"

With speed a reported factor in a third of all teen crashes, the survey provides valuable insight into the prevalence and perception of speeding, uncovering a hardcore group of aggressive drivers for whom speeding is simply a part of driving – and some who speed for "fun."

- 55 percent of all teens surveyed said they sometimes exceed the speed limit by more than 10 miles per hour
- 69 percent of teens who speed say they do so because they want to keep up with traffic
- 26 percent of self-identified "aggressive" drivers reported speeding by more than 20 miles per hour over the limit
- 17 percent say speeding is fun
- 40 percent said they would speed in the coming year
- 37 percent said they would ride with one or more friends who speed in the coming year

> "I got friends who drive safely. But other friends, they're speeding all the time, racing on the streets."
> — Male teen

Compare these last two figures with the smaller percentages who said they would smoke a cigarette or smoke marijuana in the coming year (11 and 7 percent, respectively). Alongside these more well-known teen health hazards, the magnitude of the teen driving problem becomes clear.

Other Insights on Teen Driving Attitudes and Behavior

WHY TEEN DRIVERS TAKE RISKS

- 61 percent say they take risks because they feel they "are good drivers who understand how cars work"
- 35 percent say they speed because it's "safe as long as I watch out for cops and stay in control of the vehicle"
- 27 percent say they take risks because they aren't "thinking about consequences at the moment"

These survey responses get at the heart of the challenge of changing how teens drive: a strong sense of invincibility. And, while teens may display a full understanding of the potential consequences in calm or hypothetical situations, they are much less likely to do so when they're behind the wheel, especially with another teen in the car. In the next section we'll further discuss these psychological and physiological factors behind real-time decisionmaking and peer pressure.

A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Based on survey responses, teens seem to be most receptive to safe-driving messages during the period when they are learning to drive. Among survey respondents, unsafe driving was considered a serious issue by:

- 81 percent who have learner's permits
- 70 percent who do not yet have any license
- 73 percent of those with a full driver's license

"They think, 'I'm young, God wouldn't do that to me."
— Male teen

FRIENDS ARE A BIG INFLUENCE

It's common knowledge that teens are influenced by their friends, and we know that the presence of peers plays a significant role in teen crashes. We have quantified the specific influence of friends on the way teens feel about driving.

- 44 percent said they "often" or "very often" drive with friends in the car (the circumstances under which many crashes take place)
- 47 percent said they sometimes get distracted by other people in the car
- 44 percent told us that they drive more safely *without* friends in the car

> "I'm scared of the other cars. I feel really freaked out."
> — Male teen

Trying to connect with people (possibly their friends) outside the car can have a big impact, too.

- 31 percent identified instant or text messaging while driving as "extremely" or "very" distracting
- 32 percent said the same for talking on a cell phone while driving

Our survey also revealed a need to empower teen passengers – to tap into what appears to be a willingness on the part of some teens to speak up despite feelings of futility or alienation.

> "It's very hard to speak up. It ticks the driver off."
> — Female teen

- 67 percent of teens have felt unsafe when someone else was driving
- 45 percent said they "definitely" would speak up if someone they didn't know very well was driving in a way that made them scared or uncomfortable
- When asked why they might *not* speak up, over 50 percent of all teens said the "driver wouldn't listen to me anyway," and "it's hard to be the only person who disagrees"

PARENTS AND FRIENDS: POWERFUL INFLUENCES ON TEEN DRIVERS

Whether they fear losing driving privileges, or because they genuinely count on parents for guidance – or a combination of the two – teens say their parents exercise the strongest influence on their driving behavior. But we note that friends, too, have considerable influence over how teens drive.

- 89 percent of teens say their parents are influential in encouraging safer driving
- 47 percent say their friends are a big influence
- 61 percent named injury to friends as the thing they fear most about an accident; only 33 percent worried about hurting themselves

TEENS RARELY RESPONSIBLE FOR DRIVING-RELATED COSTS

There may be a relationship as well between driving behavior and the teen's financial responsibility for the vehicle he or she drives. Future research, we hope, will shed more light on this relationship. But if, as most teens report, it's the parents who buy the teen's car and maintain the insurance, then parents are likely to have a strong influence on the teen's driving behavior.

- More than half of teens say parents played a large role in helping them obtain a car
- One in three teens (32 percent) received their car as a gift
- Over 60 percent of teens say parents pay all or most of their car insurance premiums

NOT ALL TEEN DRIVERS ARE ALIKE

Teenagers *do* have a lot in common with each other: their time is spent on similar activities, they encounter the same milestones (such as driving and graduation), they all desire independence and fun, and they may even have similar values. And yet driving attitudes appear to vary by background and gender. Any program or approach that treats all teenagers the same may be neglecting the needs of many teen drivers.

Gender

Whether it's because their parents might trust them more, or just worry about them more, based on thier responses, teen females are more likely than teen boys to be driving newer (and probably safer) cars. They also seem to harbor more cautious attitudes about driving.

- Twice as many females as males are driving newer cars (2004 or later model)
- More females than males drive with parents or guardians (41 percent vs. 28 percent)
- More females than males worry about getting into an accident (73 percent vs. 54 percent)
- More females than males, if riding with someone they didn't know well, "definitely" would say something if they were frightened or made uncomfortable by how that person was driving (52 percent vs. 39 percent)
- More females than males admitted to driving distractions

> "Most guys are show-offs behind the wheel. They're too competitive."
> — Female teen

Meanwhile, other attitudes in which teen males predominated reinforce the long-standing perception of them as risk-takers. Males see themselves as the more aggressive drivers, and more likely to be influenced by peers.

- More males than females said speeding is something they do because it's "fun" (25 percent vs. 6 percent).
- Twice as many males as females labeled themselves "aggressive" drivers.
- More males than females let peer pressure interfere with speaking up in an unsafe driving situation; 53 percent said "it's hard to be the only one who disagrees."
- More males than females named their friends as a big influence on their driving.

> "Girls have to be perfect. No one really expects anything from us."
> — Male teen

And perhaps most interesting, far more males than females said they were comfortable taking risks because they're "good drivers and understand how cars work." Significantly more girls said they would avoid driving risks in the first place. Nonetheless, according to a recent study by the National Institute of Child Health, females are slightly more likely to speed and tailgate when they have a male passenger.[7]

Ethnicity

Caucasian teens, to a greater extent than their Hispanic or African-American peers, reported that they would or might drink, speed, or ride with a speeding driver in the coming year:

- 42 percent said they'd speed more than 10 miles an hour over the limit
- 43 percent said they "definitely" or "probably" would ride with one or more friends who would be speeding
- 21 percent would drink "more than a sip or two" of alcohol

Hispanic teens report higher risk-taking and more aggressive driving than teens of other ethnic backgrounds:

- One in three Hispanic teens new to driving reported having received a traffic ticket
- More Hispanics than other ethnic groups said it's acceptable not to wear a seat belt, and Hispanics had the fewest respondents who said they wear one "often" or "very often"
- More than the teens of any other ethnic group, Hispanic teens view their peers as "very aggressive" drivers

Meanwhile, African-American teens reported more conservative attitudes toward driving:

- Accountability is important: African-American teens were the least likely to believe a hypothetical crash "would likely be someone else's fault"
- Very few African-American teens said they would shrink from confronting an unsafe driver even if, at the time, they were "excited and having fun" or "scared"

In addition to these attitudes, very few African-American teens said they frequently drive at night – a time when teen crash risk is particularly high.

The research results, taken all together, show both the surface and the depth of the problem. No single program could address it all. On the one hand, teens seem to understand the serious consequences of unsafe driving, and exhibit a rational understanding of traffic laws and the importance of following them. And for rules-of-the-road instruction, most teens have ready access to a wealth of programs. And yet, they often engage in risky behavior behind the wheel, spurred on by peer pressure, a newfound sense of freedom, and pure emotion – and by the attitudes that these factors may breed. Today, no driving program addresses that component of the problem, at least not in a way that speaks directly to all teens. Building such programs is a challenge for The Allstate Foundation, and for any organization that seeks to reduce the toll of teen traffic deaths.

Physical and Developmental Barriers to Safe Teen Driving

Our survey on teen attitudes and driving behavior is supported by recent research in adolescent psychology and developmental neuroscience. Two leading researchers in these areas, Laurence Steinberg and Jay Giedd, have shown that while teenagers possess a solid and rational understanding of risk, a host of attitudinal factors that can lead to unsafe driving come into play in actual driving situations.

These studies shed more light on why conventional safe-driving programs have been unsuccessful in reducing teen driving fatalities and injuries – and why an attitudinal approach holds the most promise for doing so.

LAURENCE STEINBERG, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology
Temple University

RESEARCHERS HAVE ONLY RECENTLY BEEN ABLE TO LINK WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CHANGES IN behavior during adolescence – an important time for physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development – to what we are learning about changes in brain physiology during this period. Doctors, teachers, and especially parents have always known that adolescence is a period of heightened sensation-seeking, poor decision-making, and vulnerability to a wide range of emotional and behavior problems. Now, new insights gained from studying the ways in which the brain changes over the course of development, the field known as "developmental neuroscience," are helping us understand why.

Different timetables for intellectual and social development

One of the most important lessons we have learned about maturation during adolescence is that different aspects of development (e.g., intellectual, emotional and social) proceed along different timetables and at different rates.

"By the age of 15 or 16, for example, most teenagers' logical reasoning abilities are the same as adults'. Their emotional and social development at this age, however, is still relatively immature."

By the age of 15 or 16, for example, most teenagers' logical reasoning abilities are the same as adults'. Their emotional and social development at this age, however, is still relatively immature. That's why an adolescent who is "book-smart" and who appears to have good reasoning abilities may actually demonstrate surprisingly poor judgment and decision-making in the real world, where a combination and variety of intellectual and psychosocial factors are at work. Immaturity in any of them can compromise a young person's judgment.

Teen risk-taking—not an issue of poor values

The growing recognition that judgment is the product of both cognitive *and* psychosocial factors is beginning to help psychologists better understand why findings from risk perception studies done in university labs haven't matched what we know about risk-taking in the real world.

In numerous university lab studies, for example, individuals have been given questionnaires and asked to evaluate the risk associated with various activities, such as driving after drinking alcohol. These studies found only a few relatively minor differences in reasoning ability and risk perception between teenagers and adults. On paper, teens acted just like adults. As a result, it was believed that adolescents took more risks in the real world than adults do because their values or priorities were different from those of adults. Psychologists once believed, in other words, not that teens perceived risk differently than adults, but that they simply choose to accept certain risks because the potential rewards (e.g., impressing one's friends) seemed to outweigh the potential costs (e.g., getting a speeding ticket).

Results change when peers and emotions come into play

In traditional laboratory studies like these, psychologists have intentionally minimized the potential influence of emotional and social factors by keeping research subjects calm, testing them when they are alone, and querying them about hypothetical situations. In the real world, however – and especially the real world of adolescents – decisions are often made under time pressure, in a group situation, or when emotions are running high, conditions under which adolescents may not perform as well as adults.

We studied judgment and risk-taking differently: We worked with three age groups – adolescents, young adults (college undergraduates) and adults in their late 20s and 30s. We designed a battery of computer-driven tasks, or games, to measure things like risk-taking, planning ahead, impulse control, and the way in which individuals balance risks and rewards when making decisions. But instead of looking at behavior only when the individuals were alone, we asked participants to bring along two friends, then we randomly assigned them to play the games alone or with their friends looking over their shoulder and giving advice.

"We found that evaluations of risk between adults and teens are nearly identical. But with friends alongside, risk-taking increased significantly among adolescents and college students."

One of these tasks is a video game in which a moving car is on the screen, and a yellow traffic light appears, at which point participants must decide whether to keep driving or apply the brakes. Participants were told that, shortly after the yellow light appeared, a wall would pop up and the car would crash if it was not stopped in time. They were also told that the longer they drove, the more points they would earn, but that if the car crashed into the wall, they would lose all the points they had accumulated. Each participant played the game several times, with the amount of time between the appearance of the yellow light and the wall varying each time. We measured risk-taking by looking at how long participants kept the car in motion and how often they stopped and then restarted the car to try to drive a little farther.

The results were fascinating. When playing the game alone, levels of risk-taking were similar across the three age groups. So, like other researchers working in a lab, we found that the risk behavior of adults and teens is nearly identical. But with friends alongside, risk-taking increased significantly among adolescents and college students (average ages 14 and 19, respectively), but not among adults (average age 37). In other words, the presence of peers increased risk-taking in the two younger groups but had no influence on the older group.

This finding has several important implications.

- When assessing adolescent judgment and risk-taking, the social context has a marked impact on the outcome. Had we observed our participants only when they were alone, we would have concluded that risk-taking did not vary with age. What we found instead was that age-related differences in risk-taking behavior depend on the context in which the behavior is measured – in this instance, on the presence of peers.

- In the presence of peers, even college students – young adults in their late teens and early 20s – exhibit behavior similar to that of adolescents. This is consistent with new findings from studies of brain maturation, which suggest that regions of the brain that control relatively more sophisticated thought processes – like those that are in play when we are trying to balance risk and reward – are still maturing through late adolescence and into early adulthood, perhaps as late as age 25. (The biology of the brain is further discussed later in this section.)

- In order to understand and address adolescent risk-taking, the role of the peer group must be considered. For reasons that are not yet clear, the presence of peers may actually sharpen an adolescent's natural appetite for risk-taking. Most of the dangerous things adolescents do are done in groups, whereas adults often take risks by themselves. **One need only consider the following fact: nearly all juvenile crime is committed in groups, whereas most adult crime is committed by individuals acting alone.** And we already know that a significant number of teen driving fatalities involve one or more teen passengers.

In view of our study's findings, graduated driver licensing laws that restrict the number of passengers for new drivers make a good deal of sense.

As mentioned earlier, our findings also find support in new research on brain maturation, which will be described in more detail later in this section. In brief, neuroscience tells us that the brain's frontal lobes – which enable an individual to plan ahead, control impulses, and weigh risks and benefits – are still maturing into the early 20s. At the same time, the brain systems that control arousal, emotional experiences, and social information

"The chief implication of this work is that strategies that rely on appealing to adolescents' logic or providing them with facts are unlikely to significantly reduce risk-taking in adolescents"

processing become much more receptive at the onset of puberty, with the result that many teens are more apt to take risks and seek out novelty and sensation. Operating simultaneously, these two aspects of brain maturation – the not yet fully formed capacity for impulse control and risk-assessment, and the heightened desire for sensation, risk, and peer approval – considerably increase the likelihood of teen traffic crashes.

The chief implication of this work is that strategies that rely on appealing to adolescents' logic or providing them with facts are unlikely to significantly reduce their risk-taking, since teenagers apparently are not deficient in either logical reasoning or risk perception. It is not surprising, then, that efforts designed to diminish adolescents' risk-taking by educating or appealing logically to them have been largely unsuccessful. Rather, it currently appears that the risk-reduction strategies that hold the most promise entail preventing adolescents from obtaining harmful substances (e.g., by enforcing laws prohibiting the sale of cigarettes or alcohol to minors) or from placing themselves in potentially dangerous situations (e.g., graduated driver licensing laws that include passenger restrictions). Programs that engage teen peers in dialogue, and which seek to neutralize the effects of attitude and social context on teen driving, may also hold some potential.

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FEW WOULD BE SURPRISED TO HEAR THAT THE BRAINS OF CHILDREN, TEENS, AND ADULTS ARE different, but actually pinpointing these differences in a scientific way has been elusive. The brain is wrapped in a tough leathery membrane, surrounded by a protective moat of fluid, and completely encased in bone. Designed to shield the brain from falls or predators' attacks, this armor has also shielded it from scientific study. Throughout most of the history of neuroscience, information about the brain was gained chiefly from trauma injuries resulting from accidents or war.

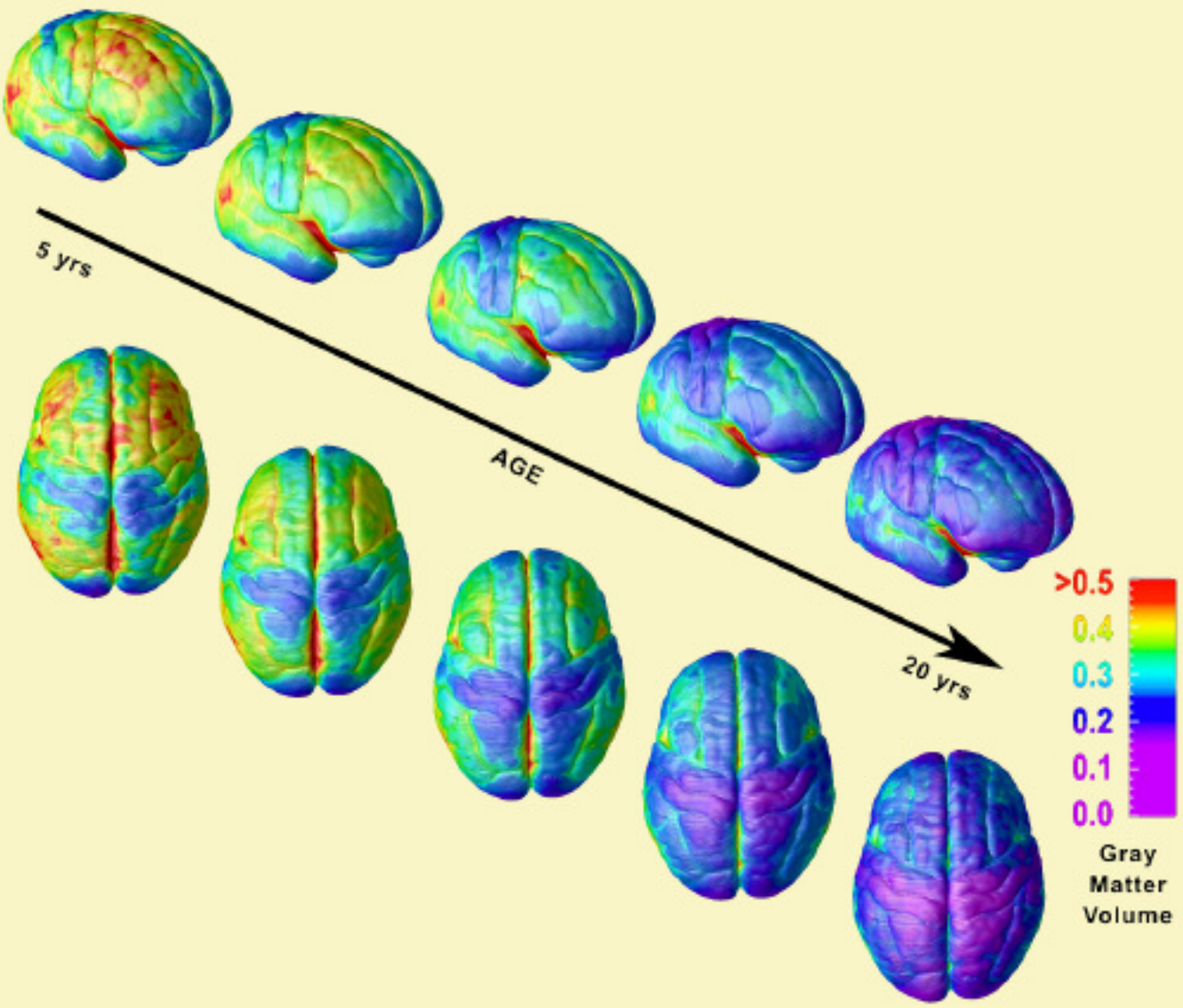
Fortunately, this is no longer the case. Advances in imaging technologies, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), now enable researchers to safely observe the structure and function of the living, growing brain. Analyzing brain scans from hundreds of boys and girls as they grow from childhood through adolescence into adulthood has revealed three main findings.

- **The brain is remarkably "plastic," or changeable, able to modify its structure in response to different environmental challenges**. Adolescence is a particularly dynamic time for the brain, creating enormous opportunity for learning, creativity, and energy, but also for trial and error, missteps, and perhaps risky behavior. Understanding the neuroscience of teen brain development may help to guide optimal driving instruction and safety guidelines.

- **The process of brain maturation occurs over a longer period of time than previously thought.** Particularly late to mature is an area in the front part of the brain – part of the neural circuitry involved in impulse control, judgment, and decision-making – that continues to develop well into the 20s. This area is also involved in "multi-tasking" or doing more than one thing at a time. Multi-tasking is one of the abilities that continues to improve most throughout the teen years. This is why it is important to limit the number of "other" tasks, such as adjusting the volume on a CD player or talking on a cell phone, that a young driver must attend to.

- **Brain development varies greatly from person to person.** Some teens are better at inhibiting impulses, have better judgment, and are better drivers than some adults. Therefore, the findings of this research are valid only for comparing averages between groups of teens and groups of adults.

In summary, advances in brain imaging technologies have indicated that there is enormous plasticity and variation in teen brain development and that areas crucial to driving safety – judgment, impulse control, multi-tasking – are not yet fully developed in many teens. As shown in Dr. Steinberg's accompanying study, this is complicated by the social contexts affecting teen driving. An important challenge will be to use these technologies to better understand individual teen drivers. The more we can learn about what sort of education and interventions are best suited to each driver, the more effective we can be in decreasing the incidence of vehicle crashes among teenage drivers.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In spite of the wealth of teen safe-driving programs, teen fatalities have remained at about the same level, more than 5,000 a year, for the past 10 years.

Current Teen-Driver Efforts:

A Wide-Angle View

In order to find the best attitude-based method of promoting safer teen driving, The Allstate Foundation first examined recent developments and ongoing initiatives aimed at making drivers – particularly teen drivers – safer. We looked at the evolution of driving instruction and technology, vehicle design improvements, current safety awareness campaigns, the role of parents, and graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws.

Changes in Driving Instruction and Technology

It might not be your father's Oldsmobile, but it's still your father's driver education. A rite of passage for American teenagers, traditional driver education and training (known to generations of students as driver's ed) has not greatly changed since the 1970s. A March 2005 article on the popular automotive website Edmunds.com reports that "scare-tactic approaches, dated materials, dull instructors . . . the stereotypical driver's ed class has students rolling their eyes even before they start."

"When you're driving, you're not thinking 'I'd better drive safe because of that driver's ed video.'" — Female teen

In addition, budget pressures, combined with research suggesting that traditional driver's ed is not effective in reducing students' crash rates, have led many secondary schools to drop it from their curricula. In a number of states, however, formal driver education and training are prerequisites to obtaining a license before the age of 18, and driver's ed remains a popular high school course in states where it is offered.

New approaches to driver education and training have sprung up largely in response to the elimination of driver's ed from standard high school curricula. Developments in computer technology, for instance, have led to the introduction of online, often interactive, delivery methods that incorporate simulators and computer-assisted learning. Increasingly, teens expect interactive technology in their learning environment, and this holds true for driver education and training. These programs are increasingly popular and more widely available – although their effectiveness in improving perceptual and risk-management skills has not yet been demonstrated, and they don't address teen attitudes at all.

ONLINE DRIVER'S ED COURSES: THE JURY'S STILL OUT

The American Automobile Association's national manager of driver training operations, William E. Van Tassel, feels that personal interaction is a critical component of the learning process and should not be circumvented. As a result, Dr. Van Tassel believes that online courses, which deprive students of the chance to learn from the personal experiences of instructors and peers, can be useful supplements to classroom instruction, but should not be viewed as replacements.

The *Sacramento Bee* reported that three years ago, the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) studied the effectiveness of state-approved home-study courses – using CD-ROMs or workbooks – and found that students who took those courses had lower passing rates on the DMV written test than did students taking similar courses in classrooms. Online courses had not emerged as a significant alternative at the time of the study, so it did not examine their effectiveness, nor did it make comparisons with traditional public high school courses. The same article noted that a researcher at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that online driver education is so new and used in so few states that federal officials have no plans to review its effectiveness.

As school-sponsored programs have dwindled, commercial courses for both beginners and young licensed drivers have multiplied. These private courses are not significantly different from in-school offerings, but fees for these courses can run as high as $600, presenting an economic barrier to some young drivers. After Connecticut dropped driver's ed from its public high school curriculum, for example, fewer 16-year-olds in that state obtained their driver's licenses.[8]

Advanced, hands-on courses that teach young drivers valuable crash-avoidance skills, such as skid control and other emergency maneuvers, are also becoming more widespread. Recent studies, however, have shown that such courses can also breed overconfidence and risk-taking behavior – underscoring the importance of addressing teen drivers' attitudes.[9]

Vehicle Safety Improvements

Teens' cars tend to be older and lack the latest safety features. Twenty-six percent of teens say the vehicle they drive most often is 11 years old or more.

During the past two decades, advances in crash-avoidance technology and in vehicle crashworthiness, as well as the introduction of air bags, have helped reduce the overall rate of occupant deaths from more than 26 per 100,000 registered vehicles in the late 1980s to 18.48 in 2003, the last year for which figures are available.[10] Government regulations used to be the main impetus behind vehicle safety improvements, but today consumers lead the charge, demanding vehicles that perform well in government and independent scientific crash tests.

Recent design advances have made vehicles generally safer in crashes. Frontal crashworthiness, for example, has markedly improved thanks to structural designs that better maintain the integrity of passenger compartments. Airbags have become increasingly sophisticated in recent years, and the newest ones protect occupants from side impacts and rollovers as well as frontal crashes.

PREVENTING, NOT JUST SURVIVING, CRASHES

The most recent advances in vehicle safety technology do more than just help occupants survive crashes: they help drivers avoid crashes in the first place. Electronic stability control, for example, senses whether a vehicle is responding appropriately to a driver's steering actions and can automatically correct for unstable situations, helping to keep the vehicle under control. Based on the technology behind antilock brakes, electronic stability control has been proven effective in reducing single-vehicle crashes.

Other new technologies, not yet in wide use, can sense a vehicle's position on the road. Lane-departure warning systems can warn drivers who are drifting out of their own lanes or getting too close to other vehicles' lanes. Adaptive cruise control can even adjust vehicle speed to maintain a preset distance from other vehicles. According to IIHS, these technological advancements appear to hold great promise for preventing crashes, though they have not yet been fully evaluated.

Unfortunately, the introduction of newer, safer vehicles and the overall decline in driver deaths have not made a dent in the epidemic of teen driving deaths. State-of-the-art safety features are ineffective if they aren't found in the cars teens drive, or if teen drivers don't know how to use them correctly.

TEENS THE LAST TO BENEFIT FROM VEHICLE IMPROVEMENTS

Only the newest vehicles incorporate the latest safety technology, of course, and some of the most promising safety features are so far found only in luxury models. According to our survey, the mean age for teens' automobiles is nearly nine years. Yet, front and passenger airbags were not mandated for all vehicles until about seven years ago. Car size is another key factor, with the driver death rate of the smallest cars being about twice that of the largest passenger vehicles.[11]

Unfortunately, teenagers tend to drive vehicles that are older or smaller than those driven by adults. Although most teenagers and their parents are aware of the dangers of driving smaller, older cars, safety considerations often are not the main factor in choosing a first car. Many young drivers "inherit" older cars from parents or older siblings and, if they do buy a car, cost tends to be a more important

consideration than advanced safety features. In the many situations in which choosing a safer car is not an option, teen attitudes toward driving safety become more important than ever.

Teens who do have a choice should be discouraged from driving sports cars or other high-performance vehicles that may encourage speeding, a major factor in many teen crashes. Moreover, sport utility vehicles and pickups, especially small ones, are less stable than cars and more prone to rollovers.[12]

State-of-the-art safety features are ineffective if they are not found on the cars teens drive, or if teen drivers don't know how to use them correctly.

In general, the safest choices for teenage drivers are midsize or large passenger vehicles – the kinds of vehicles, unfortunately, that most teens aren't terribly excited about driving.[13]

THE DANGERS OF OVERCONFIDENCE

Many teens already feel overconfident, and that "it can't happen to me." Indeed, our research showed that most teens think they're too "alert and in control" to have an accident, and safety features can actually lull them further into this false sense of security. Here, as elsewhere, a better understanding of teen attitudes may facilitate life-saving intervention.

In summary, the challenge is twofold. Although some types of vehicles are safer than others, many teens are likely to drive whatever vehicle is available, regardless of safety features or industry recommendations. And even when they have access to vehicles with the latest safety advancements, teens may not have been trained to make best use of these features, and they also may take additional risks because they feel "protected." Here is another area where an attitudinal approach can make a difference. The right kinds of changes in teen attitudes and driving behavior can at least offset the lack of up-to-date safety features in the cars teens drive.

TIPS FOR PARENTS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING THEIR TEEN'S CAR:

- **SELECT THE RIGHT KIND OF VEHICLE. Flashy sports models or high-performance vehicles that may tempt a teen to drive recklessly should be avoided. But older economy cars should also be avoided.**
- **INVEST IN A VEHICLE WITH MODERN SAFETY FEATURES. Ideally, the vehicle should be equipped with adjustable seat belts, anti-lock brakes, traction control and driver and front-passenger airbags designed to protect against front and side impacts.**
- **CHOOSE A FAMILIAR MODEL. Although, as noted earlier, teens should probably avoid certain car types, there is something to be said for driving a model similar to the type in which they learned how to drive. Teens should spend a lot of time practicing and familiarizing themselves with the characteristics of the vehicle.**

- **MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS. While a good vehicle sound system is a very pleasant thing, it can also be a serious distraction.**

Current Public Awareness Campaigns

"The mangled car parked at school doesn't do too much because you see it in movies all the time. And we don't think we'll die. I see that and I'm like, 'Man, I saw that in *Die Hard*.'" — Male teen

There's no shortage of teen safe-driving programs today in the United States. These efforts – undertaken by the private sector, non-profit organizations, and government agencies – typically include driver education, advocacy for additional teen driving restrictions, public awareness, and calls for more parental-involvement programs. Most of the programs available to teens fall into one of the following categories:

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety is an example of a national advocacy organization. Advocates, and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, are leaders in safe-driving research and communication efforts. Working with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, they also take an active role in encouraging states to strengthen their laws restricting teen driving.

Another example of national advocacy organizations is the National Student Safety Program (NSSP) of the American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association. This program helps students implement safety-related activities in their schools and communities. NSSP focuses on awareness of the teen-driving problem, in the belief that students have the power to unite against the growing menace of highway fatalities.

CORPORATE-SUPPORTED PROGRAMS

Predominantly undertaken by companies in auto-related industries, corporate programs have generally included information kits, fact sheets, and public-awareness campaigns. Recently, corporate-sponsored programs have sought to incorporate new approaches such as defensive-driving video games. Examples of such programs include:

Driving Skills for Life - **Ford Motor Company**
In its third year, Driving Skills for Life (DSFL) concentrates on four key driving skills that Ford Motor Company, Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) and safety experts believe have the most promise of preventing crashes: hazard recognition, vehicle handling, speed management, and space management. DSFL combines learning materials for students, parents, educators, and instructors for use at home, in schools and in community settings.

Get Real and Win - **DuPont**
This online driving game combines fun with DuPont's teen safety messages. The game requires teens to navigate their car along a busy highway filled with safety obstacles. The goal is to deliver friends to a concert without crashing. To further increase play, visitors are given the opportunity to enter a monthly sweepstakes.

Project Ignition - **State Farm**
Project Ignition is an opportunity for students and teachers to work together to create a public-awareness campaign for their school and community on the subject of teen-driver safety. Selected teams of students from 25 schools around the country each receive a $2,000 grant to implement art

and design programs addressing issues facing teen drivers. One of 10 finalists receives a "Best of the Best" award and a $10,000 grant. These topics include seat-belt use, speeding, impaired driving and distracted driving. The 2004-2005 Project Ignition campaigns included videos, performances, community outreach programs, promotional items, simulated crash scenes and public-service announcements – all created by students.

Be Sensible - **Cingular Wireless**

Through this program, Cingular helps drivers limit distractions while using wireless and provides wireless safety tips at many locations. Cingular also brings safe-driving education to school-age children in Maryland, Maine, Virginia, and New York.

LOCAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

These programs often arise out of individual families' personal tragedies — the loss of a child or friend in a teen-related auto crash. They are mainly parent or peer initiatives that invite other parents or teens to get involved. They consist primarily of driver education programs, and they often bring the realities and consequences of dangerous driving to teens in a direct and meaningful way. Based on specific questions in our research survey, we found that this personal approach may be more effective than any video game or high-tech simulator. Examples of local non-profit organizations include:

Brakes for Brett

Brakes for Brett is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to educating teenagers about the dangers of reckless driving and the need for organ donation. Michael Karlin, Brett's father, and Andy Short, Brett's best friend, co-founded the organization shortly after 18-year-old Brett was killed in a car crash. Short was behind the wheel the night Brett was fatally injured. Karlin and Short have participated in speaking engagements at high schools throughout the Chicago area to share their stories and promote safe driving. *(See Michael and Andy's story on pages 8-9).*

Lives Interrupted

Rebecca Davis formed Lives Interrupted after the death of her 17-year-old son Nicholas. Nick's death was a result of excessive speed and inexperience behind the wheel. After meeting another mother, Lisa Presley, who lost her 18-year-old son John Presley to street racing, Davis determined to do something about the epidemic of teen driving deaths. Lives interrupted provides community outreach, education, and defensive driver training for teens.

Driver's Edge

Founded by professional racecar driver Jeff Payne, this program is taught by professional racecar drivers. It empowers young drivers through a unique combination of classroom discussion and behind-the-wheel defensive driving techniques. This organization's overall goal is to erase the "Fast and Furious" video game image from young drivers' perceptions.

Regenerate

Regenerate uses compelling broadcast media to help save lives and give youth a better chance to live healthy lives and achieve their full potential. As part of its teen-driving safety program, Regenerate maintains a sophisticated library of public-service announcements and documentaries created by exceptional young teen filmmakers and artists.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Driver education resources for teens and parents are available through a variety of state government programs. These programs are typically implemented in conjunction with the state highway patrol, local police department or state department of transportation and often include direct outreach to teens by law enforcement officers. Examples include:

SAFTYE Stop Auto Fatalities Through Youth Efforts - **Washington State**
SAFTYE is a statewide network of more than 250 youth-organized clubs. The students elect their representatives to the Student Advisory Board, which determines the goals and policies of SAFTYE. The students make the decisions on all aspects of activities, including conference topics and speakers. To participate, teens must meet several criteria, such as signing a volunteer contract committing to stay drug- and violence-free, and to always buckle up.

Safe Community Partnership - **Las Vegas, NV**
This program, delivered at no cost to participants, includes a window sign with a phone number for motorists to comment on a teen's driving. All complaints or compliments are then passed along to the teen's parents. Teens and parents are also encouraged to sign a contract that points out the serious consequences associated with operating a vehicle, and requires both parties to obey traffic laws, wear seat belts and never drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Parents and teens also agree beforehand on the consequences if either party fails to comply with the contract.

Final Exam - **South Carolina Highway Patrol**
In 2004, the SCHP began a teen-driving enforcement and education campaign named "Final Exam" to get students to think about car safety before heading off to summer break. Local partnerships with high school principals have been created to help with the promotion of the program. Teens are also encouraged to have discussions online about driving and to send helpful information to each other.

While teen-driving programs may very well be having a positive impact in some respects, there is little documented, measurable evidence of their effectiveness. To date, few programs have been evaluated to determine their impact on teens' knowledge and behavior – and ultimately on the number of teen deaths and injuries.

Researchers and advocates also recognize the need for alternative programs. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, one major drawback of attempts to influence teens' driving behavior is that the teenagers who contribute most to the problems are among the least susceptible to behavior change through conventional education.

Targeting Alcohol-Related Fatalities

Thanks in part to organizations like Mother's Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the past two decades have seen laws enacted in all 50 states prohibiting the purchase of alcohol by anyone under the age of 21, as well as zero-tolerance laws that make it illegal for those under 21 to have any alcohol in their bloodstreams while driving.

In addition, a variety of alcohol-abuse education programs for teenagers have been developed. Many of the earliest alcohol education initiatives – ad hoc programs, mostly in school settings, that attempted to change teens' behavior without considering the influence of peers, family, and the community – had no lasting positive effect. Subsequent programs, which have tended to be more comprehensive and to involve the entire community, have been more successful. Indeed, the commonplace use of the term "designated driver" among drivers of all ages is an example of this success. Apart from a focus on social skills, these programs also encourage parent and community-wide interventions, such as reducing the availability of alcohol to teens.

Most of the reduction in teen DUI occurred in the 1980s, and the figures for blood alcohol content of 0.08 percent or greater have stabilized at about 16 percent for 16- and 17-year-olds and 28 percent for 18- to 20-year-olds since 1993.

TEEN DRUNK-DRIVING FATALITIES DOWN — BUT HOLDING STEADY

These legal and educational efforts have contributed to a dramatic decrease in the incidence of DUI among young people in the past two decades. Of the 16- to 17-year-old drivers killed in crashes in 1982, 41 percent had blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of 0.08 percent (the legal threshold for adults) or greater . By 2003, those figures had declined to 16 percent. There were similarly steep drops for 18- to 19-year-olds over this period, from 56 percent to 28 percent for BACs of 0.08 percent or greater.[14]

Although such programs have significantly reduced the incidence of DUI among teens, DUI remains a factor in many of their crashes. Moreover, most of the reduction in teen DUI occurred in the 1980s. For the past decade, the figures for BACs of 0.08 percent or greater haven't budged. They remain at about 16 percent for 16- and 17-year-olds and 31 percent for 18- to 20-year-olds.[15] In 2003, there was even a slight increase in the percentage of fatally injured teen drivers with alcohol in their bloodstream.

The combination of education, advocacy, and legislation has saved many lives, and it's clear from our research that teens understand the dangers of drinking and driving. But with vehicle crashes still the number-one cause of death for teens, it's possible that the success and visibility of drunk-driving campaigns has partially obscured other dangerous driving behaviors and attitudes. Teens need help to foster new attitudes about driving – for example, that it takes more than sobriety to make a safe driver.

Graduated Driver Licensing Laws

Graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws are designed to phase beginning drivers to full driving privileges. The GDL concept arose in the early 1970s from the work of Patricia Waller and was based on three key factors in teen-driver crashes: nighttime driving, the presence of other teens in the car, and the youth and inexperience of the driver.

Research at the University of North Carolina and the National Highway Safety Association led to early provisional GDL systems in Maryland, California, and Oregon. Though most only adopted a few elements of a strong program, the initial research informed and led to graduated licensing systems in other countries. The first notable success of a GDL program occurred in New Zealand, which introduced the first true GDL law (extended permit and passenger restriction) in 1987. Soon after, more states in the U.S. began to adopt elements of GDL.

But up through the the early 1990s, it was still easy to acquire a full-privilege driver's license at an early age in nearly every state. Only a few states required teens to drive on a learner's permit for a specified period of time (generally 30 days) before earning their driver's license, and a small number restricted nighttime driving. In most states, teen drivers could get unrestricted licenses as soon as they passed a road test and a written test – usually at age 16, and as young as 15 in some states. Only New Jersey had a higher licensing age, 17.

In 1996, Florida became the first state to adopt a full-fledged GDL system. Since then, nearly every state has adopted one or more key elements of GDL, the most common being extended learner phases and night and/or passenger restrictions. Many states also require a parent to certify that a young driver has achieved a certain minimum number of hours behind the wheel during the learner stage.

"It's rare that the police will pull you over for [a GDL violation]. Not unless you're speeding or they see something suspicious." — Female teen

Research has shown that a teen's risk of being involved in a vehicle crash is highest immediately after receiving a driver's license, but that driving under adult supervision during that time reduces teens' crash risk dramatically. GDL laws, which keep beginners out of high-risk situations during the earliest stages of driving, have proven effective in reducing the number of crashes involving teen drivers.

Additionally, the presence of passengers strongly increases crash risk for teenage drivers – the more passengers, the greater the risk. Researchers and lawmakers have recognized the significant impact teens have on their peers. To effectively respond to this risk, more than half of all states have adopted passenger restrictions.

HOW GDL STAGES WORK: MORE SUPERVISION, FEWER PASSENGERS

GDL systems generally consist of three stages beginning with an extended supervised learner phase, typically lasting six months or more, that teens must complete prior to their road test. After passing their road tests, young drivers are granted an intermediate license, which forbids or severely restricts unsupervised driving in situations known to involve particularly high crash risk, such as driving late at night or with non-family passengers. Once young drivers have completed all the requirements of the first two phases without any violations, they are issued full unrestricted licenses. The minimum age for obtaining an unrestricted license varies by state and is usually 17 or 18.

While we might expect them to chafe at the restrictive nature of GDL laws, teens themselves say they understand the value of GDL. A September 2001 Gallup Youth Survey found that 81 percent of teens aged 13 to 17 like the concept. When these teens were asked why they found GDL appealing, nearly 45 percent cited the longer period of training with an experienced driver.

Although these individual state efforts are a good beginning, there continues to be enormous state-by-state variation in the quality and comprehensiveness of GDL systems, many of which are not stringent and therefore are not effective.[16] Some states, for example, have adopted only an extended learner phase. And, despite the fact that the majority of teen drivers' nighttime crashes occur between 6 p.m. and midnight, some states' nighttime driving restrictions begin as late as 1 a.m.[17]

In response to the wide variation in GDL laws from state to state, the federal Safe Teen and Novice Driver Uniform Protection (STANDUP) Act of 2005 was drafted for introduction into the U.S. Senate. The STANDUP Act would use financial incentives to encourage states to adopt stronger, uniform GDL laws, including the following:

- A three-phase licensing process, consisting of a learner's permit, an intermediate license, and, finally, a full unrestricted license;
- A prohibition on nighttime driving during the first two phases;
- Passenger restrictions during the intermediate phase; and
- Any other restrictions or requirements that the Secretary of Transportation may decide to impose.

The STANDUP ACT did not pass during this year's congressional session. But if enacted next year, the Act will build on the success of individual states' efforts so far. Some states have evaluated the effectiveness of their GDL programs and reported crash reductions ranging as high as 30 percent. Nationally, fatal crashes involving 16-year-old drivers, the main target of GDL, have dropped by 26 percent during the period 1993-2003. Although such successes are heartening, more needs to be done.

North Carolina: A GDL Success Story

In 1997, as part of a public health task force, North Carolina implemented one of the most comprehensive GDL programs in the country — and despite an increase of nearly 500,000 new drivers, the number of teen fatalities began to decline following the first year of GDL law. A report by the University of North Carolina's Highway Safety Research Institute credited North Carolina's graduated licensing law with a 34 percent decline in crashes involving 16-year-olds. The law is credited with having an even greater effect on nighttime crashes, reducing late-night crashes for 16-year-old drivers by 47 percent.

WHY IT WORKS

According to Dr. Robert Foss, Senior Research Scientist at the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, North Carolina's GDL program has been successful due to a combination of the following elements:

- *Good structure* – The law was designed using both common sense and analysis about how teenagers learn and behave.
- *Community education* – Education among parents helped them use GDL to back up rules they desired to have in place at home.
- *Flexibility and simplicity* – The program has a strict but straightforward night restriction (no driving after 9 p.m.), but allows one teen passenger at stage 2.
- *Law enforcement is not overemphasized* – North Carolina relies on parental involvement as well as the perception of law enforcement and consequences.
- *Long transition period* – The law was gradually introduced and eventually accepted as the norm among new drivers.

THE BASICS OF NORTH CAROLINA'S MODEL LAW

Prior to enactment in North Carolina, 16-year-olds could begin driving with no supervision and with no practice besides that obtained during driver education (JAMA 10/2001). The licensing system for beginning drivers under 18 consists of three stages:

Stage 1: The process begins with a learner's permit. To get a permit, new drivers must be 15 and have completed driver education. They must be supervised by a parent or guardian and may drive only form 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. and only with their supervisor – no other passengers. To graduate to the next level, they must complete the last six months without traffic violations.

Stage 2: Teens have a limited provisional license and unsupervised driving is allowed from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. Supervised driving is allowed at any time. Drivers must complete six months of violation-free driving at this level to move to the next level.

Stage 3: Teens have a full provisional license and may drive at any time with passengers.

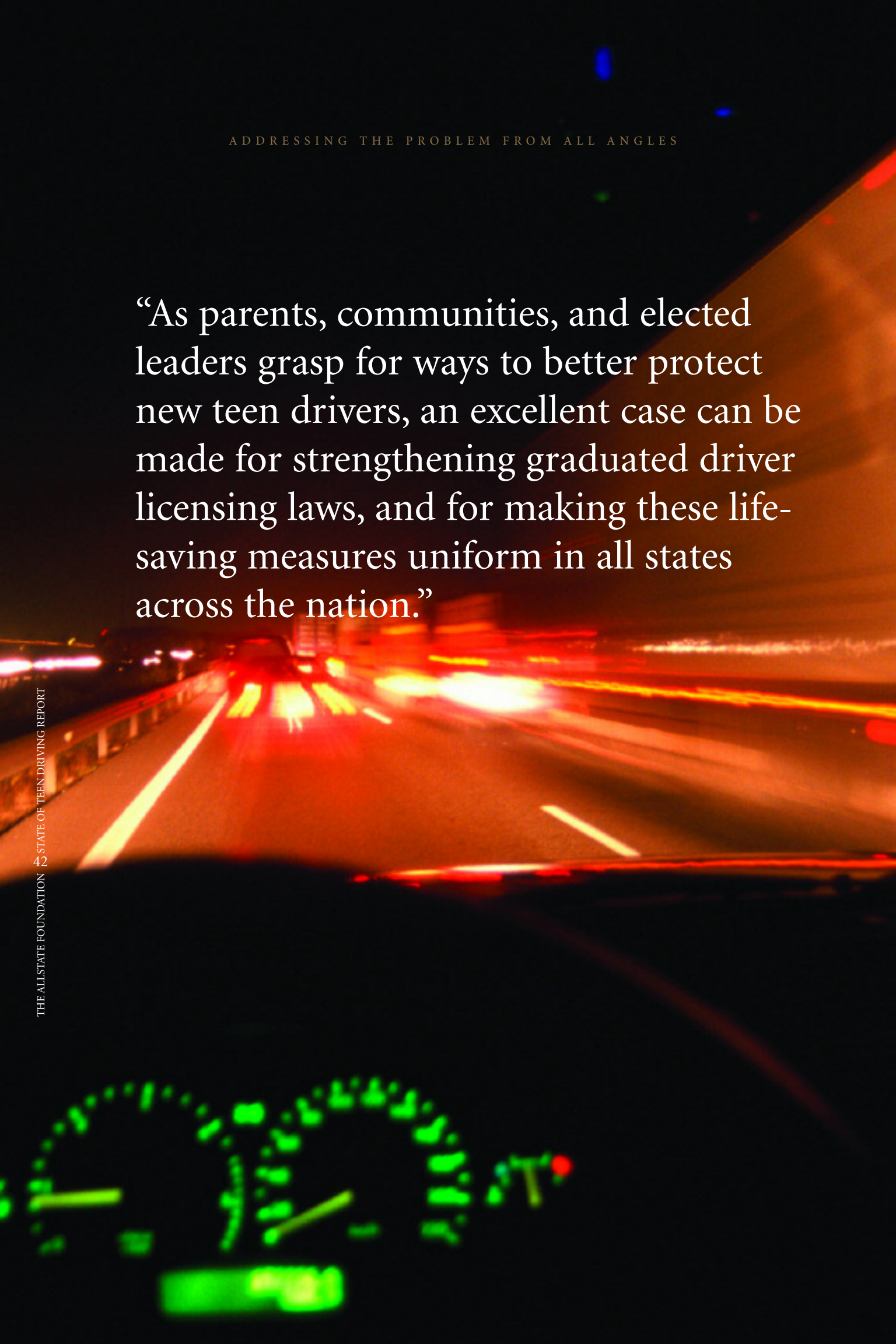
There is great variation in licensing systems in the United States. A graduated system that would optimise safety would allow learner permits at age 16, have a minimum learner holding period of at least six months, at least 30 hours of parent-certified practice driving, a driving curfew of 9 or 10 p.m. upon licensure, a restriction on having more than one non-family passenger, and graduation from the restrictions at age 18. Each of these provisions can be found in state law somewhere in the country, though no state has them all.

The following table indicates state GDL provisions and their quality, and provides an overall grade based on criteria developed by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). The table includes entry ages (which vary from 14 to 16) and exit ages (15 to 18). It indicates whether a state has an extended learner period, a parent certification requirement, night and passenger restrictions, and whether the requirements are suitably strong.

GDL Provisions and Ratings: How the States Stack Up

STATE	IIHS RATING	MINIMUM ENTRY AGE (optimal: 16)	EXTENDED LEARNER PERIOD (optimal: at least 6 months)	PARENT CERTIFICATION (optimal: 30 hours minimum)	NIGHT RESTRICTION (optimal: 9 or 10 p.m.)	PASSENGER RESTRICTION (optimal: only 1 non-family member)	MINIMUM EXIT AGE (optimal: 18)
AL	F	15	**	*	*	*	17
AK	G	14	**	**	*	**	16,6mo
AZ	P	15,7mo	*	*	0	0	16
AR	M	14	**	0	0	0	16
CA	G	15,6mo	**	**	*	**	17
CO	G	15	**	**	*	**	17
CT	G	16**	*	*	*	**	18**
DE	F	15,10mo	**	0	**	*	16,10mo
DC	G	16**	**	**	*	**	18**
FL	F	15	**	**	*	0	18**
GA	G	15	**	*	*	**	18**
HI	G	15,6mo	**	0	*	**	17
ID	M	14,6mo	*	**	**	0	16
IL	F	15	*	*	*	**	17
IN	F	15	*	0	*	**	18**
IA	F	14	**	*	*	0	17
KS	M	14	**	**	0	0	16
KY	M	16**	**	0	0	0	16,6mo
LA	F	15	**	0	*	0	17
ME	G	15	**	**	*	**	16,6mo
MD	G	15,9mo	**	**	*	**	17,9mo
MA	G	16**	**	*	*	**	18**
MI	F	14,9mo	**	**	*	0	17
MN	M	15	**	**	0	0	16
MS	M	15	**	0	**	0	16
MO	F	15	**	*	*	0	18**
MT	M	14,6mo	**	**	*	**	16
NE	M	15	0	*	*	0	17
NV	G	15,6mo	**	**	**	**	18
NH	F	15,6mo	0	*	*	**	17,1mo
NJ	G	16**	**	0	*	**	18**
NM	G	15	**	**	*	**	16,6mo
NY	G	16**	*	*	**	*	17
NC	G	15	**	0	**	**	16,6mo
ND	M	14	**	0	0	0	16
OH	F	15,6mo	**	**	*	0	17
OK	G	15,6mo	**	*	*	**	16,6mo
OR	G	15	**	**	*	**	17
PA	G	16**	**	**	*	0	17
RI	G	16**	**	**	*	**	17,6mo
SC	M	15	**	**	**	*	16,6mo
SD	M	14	*	0	**	0	16
TN	G	15	**	**	*	**	17
TX	F	15	**	0	*	**	16,6mo
UT	F	15,6mo	0	**	*	**	17
VT	F	15	**	**	0	**	16,6mo
VA	G	15,6mo	**	**	*	**	18**
WA	G	15	**	**	*	**	17
WV	F	15	**	*	*	*	17
WI	G	15,6mo	**	**	*	**	16,9mo
WY	F	15	0	**	*	**	16,6mo

Table codes: IIHS rating: G=good, F=fair, M=marginal, P=poor / * has the provision but it is not optimal (see above text)
** has optimal provision / 0 no provision



"As parents, communities, and elected leaders grasp for ways to better protect new teen drivers, an excellent case can be made for strengthening graduated driver licensing laws, and for making these life-saving measures uniform in all states across the nation."

JUDITH LEE STONE
President, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

AS PARENTS, COMMUNITIES, AND ELECTED LEADERS GRASP FOR WAYS TO BETTER PROTECT NEW teen drivers, an excellent case can be made for strengthening graduated driver licensing laws, and for making these life-saving measures uniform in all states across the nation.

My career in highway safety spans nearly 30 years. In that time, I have seen and been involved in the adoption of many programs and laws, some of which are well-intentioned, but largely ineffective. GDL laws are definitely not in this category. All the best peer-reviewed research puts us squarely in the GDL camp as individuals and organizations longing to give our new teen drivers more experience before receiving full driving privileges, and feeling passionate about the obligation to protect their health and save both their lives and those of others involved in crashes with them.

Some say the most important thing to do is get parents more involved. I agree with this, although in highway safety, one approach is rarely enough. Education without a legal underpinning goes only so far. And police can't enforce a law that doesn't exist. That is why we say effective GDL laws are the first step a state should take to change their system from one that allows hundreds of teen lives to be wasted in motor vehicle crashes, to a more sensible one that requires adequate behind-the-wheel practice time before full licensure, restricts privileges until that crucial experience is gained, and encourages parental or guardian involvement as teachers and supervisors.

It is also true that without solid and effective public policy as a foundation for systemic change, it is improbable the change everyone seeks will last. Good laws, well enforced, play a major role in changing driving behavior. They serve as the touchstone that citizens rely upon for guidance and education about how they should behave, "according to the law." A strong law governing teen driving behavior also helps parents set and better enforce their own rules at home.

Public opinion research conducted for Advocates by Lou Harris, as far back as 2001, indicates incredibly high levels of support for GDL laws: 92 percent of Americans want a 6-month learner's period; 95 percent say there should be at least 30-50 hours of practice with an adult; and 3 out of 4 support limiting the number of teen passengers and nighttime driving during the intermediate phase. Those already-high numbers have likely increased in four years, as numerous effective GDL laws have come onto the books, convincing more Americans they are the way to go.

When we know the answer in highway safety, it is incumbent upon us to act. We act, not because restrictions are always or inherently a good thing, but because we care deeply about the fact that we waste precious national resources with thousands of teens dying every year and their crashes killing thousands more involved in these terribly tragic events. GDL laws are practical and proven solutions to a raging public health epidemic.

We see a growing role for collaboration between law enforcement, advocacy organizations, parents and corporate partners.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Recommendations and Program Goals

2005 marks the beginning of one of The Allstate Foundation's new signature social programs focused on teen driving. To ensure that the Foundation has the benefit of the best thinking as we take on this issue, we sought out individuals and organizations with established expertise and successful track records.

Early counsel provided by both the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety prompted us to look beyond the conventional approaches taken by many teen-driver safety efforts that focus on providing information and technical instruction. We determined to talk directly with teens to see what they think and feel about driving. Our own research in this area, together with the outside expertise we consulted, led us to choose an attitudinal approach, which we hope will lead to better, safer driving behavior among teenagers. This approach will not come at the expense of other critical efforts to address the issue. Rather, the intent is to fill an important gap in the way teen driving has traditionally been addressed.

Allstate Foundation Teen-Driving Program – A Preliminary Framework

Our review of existing programs reveals that no national program has attempted to address teen attitudes in a comprehensive way. That's what is needed now. Given all the data we examined, and considering the input of our expert advisers, The Allstate Foundation recommends an evolving program that incorporates these elements:

Teen participation – Teens have told us loud and clear that the best way to effectively address this attitudinal challenge and generate a genuine dialogue among teens is by letting them shape the program and search for solutions. To that end, we will convene a panel of teen advisers from different walks of life throughout the country, and hold a series of teen conferences. We are committed to learning from, and better understanding, those we seek to help.

Grassroots Environment– Teens we interviewed told us that safe-driving messages would have more impact if they came from or with a connection to people in their own schools and communities. With more than half of the teens we surveyed telling us that they had already been in a crash, we believe that real teens and real parents – and real and often tragic examples – will have an impact that instructional videos and generic scare tactics simply cannot. One element of The Allstate Foundation program will provide local advocates the tools to help them reach their peers and to make a difference in their local communities.

Strict measurement and accountability – Many of the programs we studied are well-intentioned, and may in fact be making a difference, but few programs incorporate a way to measure their success. As a result, it has been difficult to differentiate between those strategies that are most effective and should be expanded or replicated and those that should be modified or even replaced. With so many competing priorities, it is important to know where best to invest limited resources for maximum impact. Building measurability and accountability into teen safe-driving initiatives will help make that possible. The Allstate Foundation will use research both to guide the development of effective strategies and tactics and also to constantly measure our progress. We will also encourage the growing number of community organizations and individuals focused on teen driving to incorporate research and measurement into their own programs wherever possible. Organizations focused on new and better driving simulation techniques are perfect candidates for more rigorous measurement.

How the Experts See It

It's important to recognize that the right kind of changes in teen attitudes and driving behavior won't by themselves solve the problem. Attitudinal programs must be supplemented by the other kinds of efforts. Our expert advisers helped us identify the following opportunity areas:

Tougher Graduated Licensing Laws – Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety continues to play a key role in pushing for stronger laws that protect young drivers and their passengers, including the expansion of GDL laws, which have succeeded in reducing teen deaths and injuries. Although some form of GDL has been implemented in every state, those laws are relatively weak in some states and therefore fail to keep teens out of the more dangerous driving circumstances. Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety supports passage of the Safe Teen and Novice Driver Uniform Protection Act of 2005 ("STANDUP"), which would set national uniform GDL standards.

Greater Parent Involvement – While the influence of peers on teen driving behavior is relatively uncharted, parental influence and control are clearly effective in making their teenagers safer drivers. Three quarters of the teens we surveyed said their parents would be best at getting them to drive more safely. And most parents are highly motivated to protect their children. Many programs focus on providing parents with the tools they need to effectively engage their teenage children on the issue. Parent-oriented and parent-founded programs are essential and should continue to receive support. Parents need more information about how GDL laws can help them, and about the safety deficiencies of many older, hand-me-down cars.

Public/Private Partnerships – We see a growing role for collaboration between advocacy organizations, parents and corporate partners to attack the problem. Local organizations, like Brakes for Brett, are already making strides toward lessening the tragedy of teen crashes. Encouraging organizations like these with public support and private resources will amplify their message.

THE CHALLENGE OF "SELLING" SAFE DRIVING TO TEENS

By Peter Zollo

President, Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU)

Reaching teens with any sort of message – whether it's about sneakers or the dangers of smoking – is a marketing challenge. It's always difficult to hit a moving target, and no lifestage changes directions more frequently. Still, there is plenty of cause for optimism: today's generation of teens is vastly different from prior cohorts. While previous generations rebelled against the system, today's teens want to excel within it. There is little evidence of a generation gap with today's young people; they generally respect authority and share their parents' values.

Today's teens are the most media-savvy generation in history, meaning they're perfectly familiar – and comfortable – with their position as a target audience. They're receptive to marketing, so long as it is both believable and engaging.

How can we hope to reach one of the most diverse cohorts in U.S. history? Realize that teens are more alike than they are different. For one, they share the same major milestones, such as getting a driver's license, going to prom, or graduating high school. Thanks to school, their days share the same shape and they're generally doing similar things during each part of the day.

Finally, race, gender, or geography aside, they're motivated by several fundamental "need-states." Teens crave independence and fun, and their interest in experimentation is one offshoot of those needs. However, despite their attempts to formulate an identity of their own, they're also experiencing a great deal of change, turmoil, and self-doubt. They are often loath to take actions that open themselves up to criticism from peers. "Indi-filiation," TRU's shorthand for this tension between individualism and affiliation, can best be summed up thusly: teens want to be interesting and unique – just like their friends.

Selling teens on safe driving poses considerable, but not insurmountable, challenges. Beyond knowing that car crashes are the leading cause of teen deaths, teens simply don't give much thought to safe driving except through the frame of substance-abuse issues. Teens recognize the perils of driving drunk. Other than that, they don't concern themselves with many details about the issue. Most – 61 percent – say they're good drivers, although 78 percent admit driving distracted, and 52 percent say they talk on a cell phone while driving.

So, how to get there? Remember that any campaign to increase teens' driving safety lives or dies on teen interest, acceptance, and engagement. Adults are simply role models and enforcers; teens are the only decision-makers that really count, and they're the primary influencers among their friends.

Too many marketers labor under the misconception that teens are driven by purely emotional responses. In fact, teens require clear, straightforward information upfront. Anything less is a waste of their time – and they're too busy to let a marketer waste their time.

Still, they're bombarded with information constantly, and they're adept at tuning out most of what they hear. All the rational information in the world won't change their behavior if they don't see it. This is where emotional engagement is crucial. Teens respect real people with real-life experiences that they may lack. Heartfelt testimony from a reckless-driving victim (or even a repentant perpetrator) would allow teens to focus on the issue's human element, helping them better digest important facts and figures.

If this emphasis on rational versus emotional needs sounds a bit mixed – it is. That is the point. A successful

"Adults are simply role models and enforcers; teens are the only decision-makers that really count and the primary influences amongst their friends."

teen brand needs both. And that is the idea: creating a "brand" for this issue that becomes shorthand to teens for a variety of messages – rational and emotional – that need to be conveyed as part of a safe-driving campaign.

Different teens need different messages, and most teens need more than one message. A brand helps to accomplish this. If you're wondering how a brand can exist without a tangible product offering, you're in good company. True, the vast majority of brands support products, goods, or services. But the idea of a product-less brand lies in creating intangible images that differentiate and communicate. For social marketers, the idea *is* the product, and the brand is the way to get teens to buy in.

One of the most effective and untapped ways to change teens' perceptions of driving safety is to inject the issue into conversations with peers. As it stands now, driving safety is a subtext rarely spoken about in teen circles. A sense of invincibility prevents most teens from imagining anything serious could happen when they're at the wheel, and teens' reluctance to rock the boat means many won't speak up when friends are driving unsafely. A message of personal empowerment – a willingness to make the right decisions and confront those who are putting themselves and others at risk – could be a potent force in changing teen attitudes, and ultimately their behavior.

Acknowledgements

The Allstate Foundation is committed to providing the most accurate and up-to-date data and information in the development of this report. We thank the following leading experts who have contributed to this report.

SUSAN A. FERGUSON, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President, Research
Insurance Institute for Highway Safety

Susan Ferguson was named Senior Vice President, Research in 2000 and began her career at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety in 1991 as a research analyst. Ferguson serves as the chair of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Advanced Airbag Performance and is a member of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety Driver Education Advisory Board, Lifesavers Planning Committee, and Transportation Research Board Committee on Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Transportation.

JAY GIEDD, M.D.
Chief, Brain Imaging
Child Psychiatry Branch
National Institute of Mental Health

Dr. Jay Giedd is a practicing child and adolescent psychiatrist and chief of Brain Imaging in the Child Psychiatry Branch at the National Institute of Mental Health. His primary research interests have focused on the biological basis of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral disorders in children and adolescents. Dr. Giedd's magnetic resonance imaging studies have shed new light on brain development in healthy and neuropsychiatrically impaired youth.

MICHAEL KARLIN
Brakes for Brett

In August 2004, following his 18-year-old son Brett's death, Karlin formed Brakes for Brett, a not-for-profit corporation created to help educate teens about the dangers of reckless driving and the need for organ donation. In the first six months of 2005, Karlin and Andy Short, Brett's best friend, spoke to over 18,000 high school students in the Chicago metropolitan area. They also conveyed their story and mission on the *Jane Pauley Show* on NBC and on all the local Chicago television stations. Karlin was also a guest on the Steve Cochran show on WGN radio, as well as the Gary O'Brian show in Champaign, Illinois, and on KSDK television in St. Louis.

ANDY SHORT
Brakes for Brett

Andy Short was Brett Karlin's best friend and was driving the car the night Brett was fatally injured. Short, who cared more about Brett's injuries than his own, has teamed up with Brett's father, Michael Karlin, to speak to high school students about the dangers of reckless driving. He has shown a great deal of courage in facing his responsibilities, and by sharing his story with other teens so that they do not repeat his mistakes. His moving story serves as an example to others that good can come out of tragedy. He has convinced many teens that safe driving is cool—and the right thing to do.

LAURENCE STEINBERG, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology
Temple University

Dr. Steinberg is the author or co-author of more than 200 scholarly articles on growth and development during the teenage years, as well as numerous books including *Adolescence*, a leading college textbook on the subject, now in its seventh edition. A nationally recognized expert on psychological development and family relations during adolescence, Dr. Steinberg's research has focused on a range of topics in the study of contemporary adolescence, including parent-adolescent relationships, adolescent employment, high school reform, and juvenile crime and justice. Dr. Steinberg is a member of the National Academies' Committee on Adolescent Health and Behavior, and has been a frequent consultant to state and federal agencies and lawmakers on child labor, secondary education, and juvenile justice policy.

JUDITH LEE STONE
President
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

Judith Lee Stone serves as President (an elected post) and as a member of the Board of Directors of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, as well as heading the staff as Executive Director. She also served on the Advisory Board of the Partners for Child Passenger Safety, a collaborative research project of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm Insurance Companies, and served as a member of two U.S. DOT Blue Ribbon Panels on Protecting Our Older Child Passengers and on Trunk Entrapment. In 2000-2001, Stone served on a California expert panel exploring ways to address issues affecting unattended children in and around motor vehicles, whose findings led to landmark legislation.

ALLAN F. WILLIAMS, Ph.D.
Allan F. Williams LLC
(Retired Chief Scientist, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)

Williams' career has included 40 years of research on social problems. In the last 32 years, he performed and managed highway safety research with Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and retired as Chief Scientist at the end of 2004. Williams has conducted extensive research in a wide variety of highway safety areas, with emphasis on young drivers, alcohol and other drugs, and occupant restraints. His research on young drivers helped form the basis for graduated licensing. Williams is the author of more than 100 publications on young drivers and is regarded as an international authority on alcohol impaired driving and young driver and licensing issues. Williams has lectured widely on young driver issues in the United States, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

PETER ZOLLO
President
Teenage Research Unlimited

Peter co-founded TRU in 1982 as the first market-research firm to specialize exclusively in teenagers. Since that time, TRU has grown to be the nation's preeminent youth-research firm. Peter is highly involved with several youth social-marketing issues. He has conducted research for and consulted on the Truth campaign from the American Legacy Foundation and has worked on several of the leading state anti-tobacco campaigns. He has consulted with the Centers for Disease Control on this issue and served as a member of the Columbia University expert panel on youth and tobacco. Peter has been widely published and has appeared on several network news programs, including "The CBS Evening News with Dan Rather," "Good Morning America," "ABC World News Tonight," and the ABC prime time special "What Makes Teens Tick."

Endnotes

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Survey Questions and Results

If you had to guess, what would you say is the number-one cause of death for American teenagers?

Smoking	1.4
Drugs or alcohol	28.3
Diseases like cancer or diabetes	1.2
Motor vehicle crashes	51.3
Suicide	12.6
Gang violence	5.2

How serious would you say each of the following issues is for people your age?

	Not at All Serious	Slightly Serious	Somewhat Serious	Very Serious	Extremely Serious
Using hard drugs (such as crystal meth or cocaine)	2.2	8.2	15.5	20	54.1
Smoking marijuana	4.7	10.3	20.1	31.5	33.5
Getting drunk	3.2	7.1	19.4	32.5	37.9
Driving drunk	1.5	5	12	25.8	55.7
Driving unsafely	2.4	6	17.5	37.5	36.7
Smoking cigarettes	3.5	9.1	25.5	32.4	29.6
Eating fast-food	25.8	23.5	26.1	10.5	14.2

Do you have your driver's license (or permit)?

Yes, driver's license	60
Yes, drivers permit	20
No	20

How long do you think it will be before you get your driver's license?

Less than 6 months	37.2
6-12 months	44.8
More than a year	17.2
I don't expect to get a driver's license	0.8

How long have you been driving?

Less than 1 month	2.8
1-3 months	9.5
4-6 months	15.6
6-12 months	36.9
More than a year	33.9
I have my license but have never driven	1.2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To better understand young teen drivers and teens expecting to get their driver's license in the next year, The Allstate Foundation commissioned Teen Research Unlimited (TRU) in 2005 to conduct national quantitative and qualitative studies of 15- to 17-year-old respondents. Targets were set to ensure a geographically and ethnically diverse research sample and an approximate balance by gender.

How often would you say you drive...

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
On weekdays	0.5	6.6	19.5	24.2	49.2
On weekends	0.3	2.7	17.0	29.6	50.3
Alone	3.5	6.9	20.5	29.0	40.1
With friends	6.1	13.6	35.9	25.6	18.9
With parents	4.5	30.5	31.0	22.2	11.8
On long trips (more than 20 miles/minutes)	9.9	32.0	31.3	15.7	11.1
Late at night	14.8	28.6	31.6	16.0	8.9

Overall, how would you describe the driving behavior of young teen drivers?

Very aggressive	14.5
Somewhat aggressive	47.6
In the middle	31.8
Somewhat defensive	2.8
Very defensive	0.9
Don't know	2.5

How would you describe *your* driving in general?

Very aggressive	2.4
Somewhat aggressive	12.5
In the middle	40.1
Somewhat defensive	30.1
Very defensive	13.0
Don't know	2.0

Which of the following describes the mileage on the vehicle that you drive most often?

It has low miles (less than 30,000)	14
It has moderate miles (30,000-75,000)	34.3
It has high miles (more than 75,000)	49
Don't know	2.7

What year is the vehicle you drive most often?

2004-2005	8%
2000-2003	27%
1995-1999	38%
1994 or older	26%

Of the following, which <u>three</u> have the most influence on how you drive?

Friends	47.4
Girlfriend or boyfriend	15.3
Parents	89.4
Brother or sister	21.3
Driver's-education teacher	40.6
Police	61.1
Media (such as news stories, scenes from movies, advertising, etc.)	21.1
Video games	3.8

How distracting is each of the following to you <u>when you're driving</u>?

	Not at All Distracting	Slightly Distracting	Somewhat Distracting	Very Distracting	Extremely Distracting	Never Happened
Seeing crashes and other incidents on the side of the road	8.0	19.5	28.1	24.5	13.8	6.2
Being tired	3.5	20.0	28.8	28.0	13.1	6.70
Having friends in the car	14	31.1	35.3	11.5	4.8	3.3
Music (adjusting volume, changing CDs, using iPod etc.)	29.8	35.1	25.1	6.7	2.2	1.2
Bad weather	6.7	19.1	29.3	28.0	15.3	1.7
Your emotional state (being excited, upset, or nervous)	12.6	24.0	31.4	20.6	7.8	3.5
Talking on a cell phone	9.5	18.8	25.3	21.3	11.1	14.0
Instant or text messaging	9.7	9.7	13.5	16.5	14.8	35.9
Eating or drinking	11.3	30.1	29.3	18.1	2.5	8.7
A bug entering or hitting the car	33.1	27.3	18.1	11.5	3.7	6.3

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
I worry about getting into a car accident	6.6	11.3	18.5	37.1	25.6	1.0
Most teens with their licenses are good drivers	12.7	34.0	28.6	19.7	3.4	1.7
Most accidents involving teens result from them driving drunk	4.6	18.1	21.1	31.9	19.5	4.9
People can be skilled drivers, but still might not be safe drivers	2.1	3.8	9.9	41.6	41.0	1.7
It's easy to be distracted while driving	3.3	6.3	11.7	42.8	34.4	1.6
If I'm in a car accident, it would likely be someone else's fault	2.5	5.8	39.9	25.1	21.2	5.6
It's OK to ride in a car without a seatbelt	71.4	13.4	5.9	6.3	2.8	0.2
I've felt unsafe driving with someone before	7.4	7.4	14.4	33.6	33.8	3.5
Guys are better drivers than girls	20.8	13.8	32.9	15.7	12.3	4.6
Girls are better drivers than guys	15.3	19.5	36.8	13.8	10.0	4.7
Guys are safer drivers than girls	22.3	24.3	35.6	9.0	4.8	4.1
Girls are safer drivers than guys	9.3	11.5	34.3	25.0	15.5	4.5
I drive more safely when I'm alone than when friends are with me	8.2	11.7	22.0	27.9	16.2	14.1
I drive more safely with parents in the car than when I'm alone	7.0	9.4	17.3	26.8	29.0	10.6

What things do you like most about driving? Please be as specific as possible (open-ended question).

Symbolism (fun, speed, excitement)	84%
Freedom/Independence	73%
Responsibility	6%
Becoming an adult/Priviledge	5%
Escape/Get away	4%
Speed	4%
Convenience	3%
Privacy	3%

When you personally are driving, how often do you…

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Speed (more than 10 m.p.h. over the limit)	17.0	28.1	32.9	15.5	6.5
Speed (more than 20 m.p.h. over the limit)	52.2	28.5	13.0	4.5	1.8
Tailgate (follow other drivers very closely)	45.4	33.3	16.3	3.7	1.3
Race another car	72.5	15.6	8.8	2.0	1.0
Make and answer phone calls	22.0	22.1	30.0	18.3	7.7
Read or write text messages (while driving)	68.1	19.1	8.0	3.3	1.5
Speed up to get through a yellow light	12.6	24.3	38.6	16.5	8.0
Unwrap and/or eat food (while driving)	20.5	31.3	35.9	9.5	2.8
Come to a full, complete stop at stop signs	1.3	8.3	15.1	31.8	43.4
Wear your seatbelt	1.3	2.2	5.2	7.5	83.9
Cut in front of other drivers	48.1	36.6	12.5	2.2	0.7
Change lanes	0.8	3.0	10.3	29.0	56.9
Take your eyes off the road to look at something outside	7.2	27.3	52.2	10.0	3.3
Get distracted by other people in the car	11.3	42.1	40.1	5.7	0.8
Turn fast enough that your car skids	62.6	24.8	9.5	2.8	0.3
Make an illegal U-turn	59.6	26.3	12.0	1.2	1.0
Turn without signaling	37.6	38.4	19.5	3.5	1.0
Pass other drivers who are going slower than you	6.7	11.6	42.8	28.1	10.8
Change lanes without signaling	38.1	37.6	20.0	3.3	1.0
Squeal your tires	59.6	24.6	12.3	2.7	0.8
Run a red light without stopping	76.9	17.5	3.8	1.5	0.3

What would you say are the main reasons that you speed?

Teens have so many restrictions, when I'm driving I like being free to blow off a few rules	9.0
Speeding is fun	16.8
Speeding is the only way I can be on time	24.4
I'm just trying to keep up with traffic and don't want to cause an accident	68.9
Keeping to the speed limit is uncool	3.2
I'm embarrassed or pressured when friends or others are in the car	10.8
It's safe as long as I watch for cops and stay in control of the vehicle	35.3
Speeding isn't like a real crime-everybody speeds or drives carelessly	17.4
Other	12.8

Many young people think a serious car accident will never happen to them. What would you say are the main reasons that a car accident may not happen to you personally?

I'm a good driver who pays attention	60.5
Bad accidents don't actually happen as often as people say	6.6
There's always someone or something watching out for me	12.1
Only extreme speeding or really stupid decisions cause bad accidents	28.8
I'm young, alert, and in control of my car	36.3
Whatever happens will happen-I can't control my fate	25.9
I don't really care if something happens	1.8
Other	6.4
None of these	10.5

If you were riding in a car with someone you didn't know very well, and he or she was driving in a way that made you scared or uncomfortable (going too fast, tailgating, racing another driver, etc.), how likely would you be to say something?

Definitely would not say anything	1.8
Probably would not say anything	8.9
Might or might not say anything	16.8
Probably would say something	26.1
Definitely would say something	44.9
Don't know	1.6

Which of the following are reasons why you might <u>not</u> say anything?

It's just not cool and people might not want to hang out with me	33.1
The driver wouldn't listen to me anyway	44.7
Speaking up would ruin it for everyone in the car	22.5
It's pretty unlikely that anything really bad will happen	14.5
It's hard to be the only person who disagrees	42.5
Even if I'm worried or scared, I'm also excited and having fun	17.8
Other	6.5

How many times have you ever…

	None	One	Two	Three	Four or more
Been in a car accident when someone else was driving	52.2	35.1	9.7	1.2	1.8
Been in an accident when you were driving	74.2	20.1	4.7	0.7	0.3
Been at fault for a car accident	83.4	14.0	2.0	0.7	0.0
Been pulled over but not ticketed	77.9	16.6	4.0	1.2	0.3
Been ticketed for speeding	85.7	10.1	2.8	1.0	0.3
Been ticketed for running a red light	98.0	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.0
Been ticketed for making an illegal U-turn	98.3	1.2	0.3	0.2	0.0
Been ticketed for not coming to a complete stop at a stop sign	96.7	2.8	0.5	0.0	0.0
Been ticketed for some other moving violation (reckless driving, too fast for conditions, etc.)	92.8	5.5	1.5	0.0	0.2
Ridden in a car when the driver was a friend who had been drinking	79.0	12.6	3.8	1.0	3.5
Driven a car after drinking any alcohol	88.2	7.3	1.7	0.7	2.2

Any poor driving decision – whether it's not using your turn signal, speeding, or making a dangerous pass on a highway- means you've decided to take a risk. What is the main reason you'd be willing to take a risk like this?

I think I can handle it-I'm a good driver and I understand how cars work	25.6
I'm not thinking about the consequences at that moment	26.8
I think the car's safety features would take care of any loss of vehicle control	1.3
I drive a large vehicle, which means that my chances for serious injury or death are lower	1.2
I enjoy the thrill of taking risks and making snap decisions	3.2
Friends see me as a risk taker, and I like having that image	1.0
Other	4.7
I would never take risks like those described	36.3

How likely do you think it is that you'll do the following within the next year?

	Definitely Will Not	Probably Will Not	Might or Might Not	Probably Will	Definitely Will	Don't Know
Speed (drive more than 10 m.p.h. over the limit)	15.7	18.4	24.3	25.0	14.7	2.0
Speed (drive more than 20 m.p.h. over the limit)	40.9	24.7	15.9	11.1	5.9	1.6
Drink alcohol (beer, wine, etc.)- more than just a sip or two	54.1	15.8	10.3	11.8	7.2	0.8
Smoke a cigarette	72.6	7.6	7.9	5.9	5.2	0.8
Smoke marijuana (weed/pot)	76.3	8.5	6.8	3.9	3.5	1.0
Ride with one or more friends who is speeding	18.3	17.6	25.0	27.5	9.6	2.1

If you were to cause a car accident, what outcomes would you fear the most?

Injury to myself	33.0
Injury to family members riding in the car	59.5
Injury to friends riding in the car	61.2
My having to pay for the damage	7.6
My parents having to pay for the damage	10.2
Hurting someone in another car or who is on foot	66.3
Cost of my auto insurance will increase	11.2
Disappointing and angering my parents	26.0
Disappointing my friends	1.3
Having a criminal record, serving time in jail, legal costs	21.6
Other	2.1

Which people could be best at getting you to drive more safely?

A celebrity	22.0
A teacher	25.7
A parent	75.3
A friend	53.3
Another teen	36.6
A coach	16.1
A Counselor	11.5
A police officer	50.4
A professional driver (like a NASCAR driver)	32.6
Other	5.4
None of these	1.5

Which of the following types of people do you think could make a difference in how you think about your driving?

Someone who caused an accident in which someone was injured	24.0
An expert on vehicles, driving safety, and the law	28.6
Someone who has never caused an accident	6.7
Someone who has never been ticketed for a moving violation	6.0
Someone known for being responsible	19.2
Someone who has lost someone close to them in an accident	51.1
Someone who caused an accident in which someone was killed	61.2
None of these	1.6

We care about your comments. Please use the card below to give us any thoughts you have about *Chronic: A Report on the State of Teen Driving* or about The Allstate Foundation.

Comments card

Your comments can help us improve the way we communicate about Foundation activities and programs. Please evaluate the statements below using a scale from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 4 (Strongly Disagree).

1. The report enhanced my understanding of the teen-driver safety issue.

   1 Strongly Agree 2 Agree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly Disagree

2. The approach described in the report, focusing on teen attitudes and beliefs about driving, is a beneficial way to reduce teen crash fatalities and injuries.

   1 Strongly Agree 2 Agree 3 Disagree 4 Strongly Disagree

3. Which section did you find most useful?

   _____

4. Which section did you find least useful?

   _____

5. The teen driving program will launch in Spring of 2006 – are there any suggestions you'd like to share with us?

   _____

   _____

5. Would you like to receive more information in the future about The Allstate Foundation's teen driving program?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

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